CARL KRINKEN

CHILDREN'S BOOK
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Dear Stanton

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he will read it —

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CARL KRINKEN;

OR,

THE CHRISTMAS STOCKING.

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CARL KRINKEN;

OR,

THE CHRISTMAS STOCKING.

WHEREVER Santa Claus lives, and in whatever spot of the universe he harnesses his reindeer and loads up his sleigh, one thing is certain—he never yet put anything into that sleigh for little Carl Krinken. Indeed, it may be noted as a fact, that the Christmas of poor children has but little of his care. Now and then a cast-off frock or an extra mince-pie slips into the load, as it were accidentally; but in general Santa Claus aims at higher game—gilt books and sugarplums, and fur tippets, and new hoods, and crying babies, and rocking-horses, and guns and drums and trumpets; and what have poor children to do with these? Not but that they might have something to do with them—it is a singular fact that poor children cut their teeth quite as early as the rich, even that sweet tooth, which is destined to be an unsatisfied tooth all the days of its life, unless its owner should perchance grow up to be a sugar refiner. It is also remarkable that though poor children can bear a great deal of cold, they can also enjoy being warm—whether by means of a new dress or a load of firing, and the glow of a bright blaze looks just as comfortable upon little cheeks that are generally blue, as upon little cheeks that are generally red; while not even dirt will hinder the kindly heat of a fire of coals from rejoicing the little shivering fingers that are held over it.

I say all this is strange—for nobody knows much about it; and how can they? When a little girl once went down Broadway with her muff and her doll, the hand outside the muff told the hand within that he had no idea what a cold day it was. And the hand inside said that for his part he never wished it to be warmer.

But with all this Santa Claus never troubled his head—he was too full of business, and wrapped up in buffalo skins besides; and though he sometimes thought of little Carl, as a good-natured little fellow who talked as much about *him* as if Santa Claus had given him half the world, yet it ended with a thought, for his hands were indeed well occupied. It was no trifle to fill half a million of *rich* little stockings, and then—how many poor children had none to fill? or if one chanced to be found, it might have holes in it; and if the sugarplums should come rolling down upon such a floor!

To be sure the children would not mind that, but Santa Claus would.

Nevertheless, little Carl always hung up his stocking, and generally had it filled—though not from any sleigh load of wonderful things; and he often amused himself, on Christmas Eve, with dreaming that he had made himself sick with eating candy, and that they had a pile of mince-pies as high as the house. So altogether, what with dreams and realities, Carl enjoyed that time of the year very much, and thought it was a great pity Christmas did not come every day. He was always contented too with what he found in his stocking; while some of his rich little neighbours had theirs filled only to their hearts' *dis*content, and fretted because they got what they did not want, or for something that they had not got. It was a woeful thing if a top was painted the wrong colour, or if the name of a rocking horse was too short, or if his bridle was of black leather instead of red.

But when Carl once found in his stocking a little board nailed upon four reels for wheels, and with nothing better than a long piece of twine to draw it with, *his* little tongue ran as fast as the reels, and he had brought his mother a very small load of chips in less than five

minutes. And a small cake of maple sugar which somehow once found its way to the same depending toe, was a treasure quite too great to be weighed; though it measured only an inch and a half across, and though the maple trees had grown about a foot since it was made.

"Wife," said John Krinken, "what shall we put into little Carl's stocking to-night?"

"Truly," said his wife, "I do not know. Nevertheless we must find something, though there be but little in the house."

And the wind swept round and round the old hut, and every cupboard rattled and said, in an empty sort of way, "There is not much here."

John Krinken and his wife lived on the coast, where they could hear every winter storm rage and beat, and where the wild sea sometimes brought wood for them, and laid it at their very door. It was a driftwood fire by which they sat now, this Christmas Eve, the crooked knee of some ship, and a bit of her keel, with nails and spikes held in their places by rust, and a piece of green board stuck under to light the whole. The andirons were two round stones, and the hearth was a flat one; and in front of the fire sat John Krinken on an old box making a fishing-net, while a splinter chair upheld Mrs. Krinken and a half-mended red flannel-shirt. An old chest, between the two, held patches and balls of twine; and the crooked knee, the keel, and the green board, were their only candles.

"We must find something," repeated John. And pausing with his netting-needle half through the loop, he looked round towards one corner of the hut.

A clean rosy little face and a very glossy set of thick curls rested there, in the very middle of the thin pillow and the hard bed; while the coverlet of blue check wat tucked round and in, lest the drift-wood fire should nos do its duty at that distance.

John Krinken and his wife refreshed themselves with a long look, and then returned to their work.

"You've got the stocking, wife?" said John, after a pause.

"Ay," said his wife, "it is easy to find something to fill."

"Fetch it out then, and let us see how much it will take to fill it."

Mrs. Krinken arose, and going to one of the two little cupboards she brought thence a large iron key; and then having placed the patches and thread upon the floor, she opened the chest, and rummaged out a long, gray, woollen stocking, with a white toe and heel, and various darns in red. Then she locked the chest again and sat down as before.

"The same old thing," said John Krinken, with a glance at the stocking.

"Well," said his wife, "it's the only stocking in the house that is long enough."

"I know one thing he shall have in it," said John; and he got up and went to the other cupboard and fetched from it a large piece of cork. "He shall have a boat that will float like one of Mother Carey's chickens." And he began to cut and shape with his large clasp knife, while the little heap of chips on the floor between his feet grew larger, and the cork grew more and more like a boat.

His wife laid down her hand which was in the sleeve of the red jacket, and watched him.

"It will never do to put that in first," she said; "the masts would be broken. I think I'll fill the toe of the stocking with apples."

"And where will you get apples?" said John Krinken, shaping the keel of his boat.

"I've got them," said his wife, "three rosy-cheeked apples. Last Saturday, as I came from market, a man went by with a load of apples; and as I came on I found that he had dropped three out of his waggon. So I picked them up."

"Three apples," said John. "Well, I'll give him a penny to fill up the chinks."

"And I've got an old purse that he can keep it in," said the mother.

"How long do you suppose he will keep it?" said John.

"Well, he'll want to put it somewhere while he does keep it," said Mrs. Krinken. "The purse is old, but it was handsome once, and it will please the child, anyway. And then there are his new shoes."

So when the boat was done, Mrs. Krinken brought out the apples and slipped them into the stocking, and then the shoes went in, and the purse, and the penny—which of course ran all the way down to the biggest red darn of all, in the very toe of the stocking.

But there was still abundance of room left.

"If one only had some sugar things," said Mrs. Krinken.

"Or some nuts," said John.

"Or a book," rejoined his wife: "Carl takes to his book wonderfully."

"Yes," said John, "all three would fill up in fine style. Well, there is a book he can have—only I don't know what it is about, nor whether he would like it. That poor lady we took from an American wreck when I was mate of the *Skeen-elf*, had it in her pocket, and she gave it to me when she died—because I didn't let her die in the water, poor soul! She said it was worth a great deal. And I think the clasp is silver."

"Oh, I daresay he would like it!" said Mrs. Krinken; "give him that, and I'll put in the old pine cone—he's old enough to take care of it now. I think he will be content."

The book with its worn leather binding and tarnished silver clasp, was dusted and rubbed up and put in, and the old sharp-pointed pine cone followed; and the fisherman and his wife followed it up with a great deal of love and a blessing.

And then the stocking was quite full.

It was midnight; and the fire had long been covered up, and John Krinken and his wife were fast asleep, and little Carl was in the midst of the hard bed and his sweet dreams as before. The stocking hung by the side of the little fireplace, as still as if it had never walked about in its life, and not a sound could be heard but the beat of the surf upon the shore and an occasional sigh

from the wind; for the wind is always melancholy at Christmas.

Once or twice an old rat peeped cautiously out of his hole, and seeing nobody, had crossed the floor and sat down in front of the stocking, which his sharp nose immediately pointed out to him. But though he could smell the apples plainly enough, he was afraid that long thing might hold a trap as well; and so he did nothing but smell, and snuff, and show his teeth. As for the little mice, they ran out and danced a measure on the hearth and then back again; after which one of them squealed for some time for the amusement of the rest.

But just at midnight there was another noise heard—as somebody says—

"You could hear on the roof
The scraping and prancing of each little hoof;"

and down came Santa Claus through the chimney.

He must have set out very early that night, to have so much time to spare, or perhaps he was cold in spite of his furs; for he came empty-handed, and had evidently no business calls in that direction. But the first thing he did was to examine the stocking and its contents.

At some of the articles he laughed, and at some he frowned, but most of all did he shake his head over the love that filled up all the spare room in the stocking. It was a kind of thing Santa Claus was not used to; the little stockings were generally too full for anything of that sort—when they had to hold candy enough to make the child sick, and toys enough to make him unhappy because he did not know which to play with first, of course very little love could get in. And there is no telling how many children would be satisfied if it did. But Santa Claus put all the things back just as he had found them, and stood smiling to himself for a minute, with his hands on his sides and his back to the fire. Then tapping the stocking with a little stick that he carried, he bent down over Carl and whispered some words in his ear, and went off up the chimney.

And the little mice came out and danced on the floor till the day broke.

"Christmas day in the morning!" And what a day it was! All night long as the hours went by, the waves had beaten time with their heavy feet; and wherever the foam and spray had fallen upon board, or stone, or crooked stick, there it had frozen, in long icicles, or fringes, or little white caps. But when the sun had climbed out of the leaden sea, every morsel of foam and ice sparkled and twinkled like morning stars, and the Day got her cheeks warm and glowing as fast as she could; and the next thing the sun did was to walk in at the hut window and look at little Carl Krinken. Then it laid a warm hand upon his little face, and Carl had hardly smiled away the last bit of his dream before he started up in bed and shouted—

"Merry Christmas!"

The mice were much alarmed, for they had not all seen their partners safe home; but they got out of the way as fast as they could, and when Carl bounded out of bed he stood alone upon the floor.

The floor felt cold, very; Carl's toes curled up in the most disapproving manner possible, and he tried standing on his heels. Then he scampered across the floor and began to feel at the stocking, beginning at the top. It was plain enough what the shoes were, but the other things puzzled him till he got to the foot of the stocking; and *his* feet being by that time very cold (for both toes and heels had rested on the floor in the eagerness of examination), Carl seized the stocking in both hands and scampered back to bed again; screaming out, "Apples! apples! apples!"

His mother being now awakened by his clambering over her for the second time, she gave him a kiss, and a "Merry Christmas!" and got up; and as his father did the same, Carl was left in undisturbed possession of the warm bed. There he laid himself down as snug as could be, with the long stocking by his side, and began to pull out and examine the things one by one, after which each article was laid on the counterpane outside.

"Well, my boy, how do you like your things?" said Mrs. Krinken, coming up to the bed just when Carl and the empty stocking lay side by side.

"First-rate!" said Carl. "Mother, I dreamed last night that all my presents told me stories. Wasn't it funny?"

"Yes; I suppose so," said his mother, as she walked away to turn the fish that was broiling. Carl lay still and looked at the stocking.

"Where did you come from, old stocking?" said he.

"From England," said the stocking very softly.

Carl started up in bed, and looked between the sheets and over the counterpane, and behind the head-board; there was nothing to be seen. Then he shook the stocking as hard as he could, but something in it struck his other hand rather hard too. Carl laid it down and looked at it again, and then cautiously putting in his hand, he with some difficulty found his way to the very toe; there lay the penny, just where it had been all the time, upon the largest of the red darns.

"A penny!" cried Carl. "Oh, I suppose it was you who was talking, wasn't it?"

"No," said the penny. "But I can talk."

"Do you know where *you* came from?" said Carl, staring at the penny with all his eyes.

"Certainly," said the penny.

"I dreamed that everything in my stocking told me a story," said Carl.

"So we will," said the penny. "Only to you. To nobody else."

Carl shook his head very gravely, and having slipped the penny into the little old purse, he put everything into the stocking again, and jumped out of bed; for the drift-wood fire was blazing up to the very top of the little fireplace, and breakfast was almost ready upon the old chest.

But as soon as breakfast was over, Carl carried the stocking to one corner of the hut where stood another old chest; and laying out all his treasures thereon, he knelt down before it.

"Now begin," he said. "But you mustn't all talk at once; I think I will hear the apples first, because I might want to eat them up. I don't care which begins."

THE STORY OF THE THREE APPLES.

"I ASSUME to myself the task of relating our joint history," said the largest of the three apples, "because I am, perhaps, the fairest minded of us all. The judgment and experience of my younger sister Half-ripe are as yet immature, and my little brother Knerly is unfortunately of a somewhat sour disposition, and therefore less likely to represent things in a pleasant light. My own name is Beachamwell."

At this opening the two smaller apples rolled over in an uncomfortable sort of way, but said nothing.

"As for me," continued Beachamwell, "I have not only been favoured with a southern exposure, but I have also made the most of whatever good influences were within my reach, and have endeavoured to perfect myself in every quality that an apple should have. You perceive not only the fine roundness of my shape, but also the perfect and equal colour of my cheeks. My stem is smooth and erect, and my eye precisely in a line with it; and if I could be cut open this minute I should be found true to my heart's core. I am also of a very tender disposition, being what is usually called *thin-skinned;* and a very slight thing would make a permanent and deep impression on me. My behaviour towards every one has always been marked by the most perfect smoothness, and on intimate acquaintance I should be found remarkably sweet and pleasant."

"You'd better not say any more about yourself at present, Beachamwell," said Carl, "because I might eat you up before you got through your story, and that would be a pity. Let me hear about Half-ripe and Knerly."

"My sister Half-ripe," said Beachamwell, "though with the same natural capabilities as myself, has failed to improve them. Instead of coming out into the warm

and improving society of the sun and the wind, she has always preferred to meditate under the shade of a bunch of leaves; and though in part she could not help doing credit to her family, you will perceive that her time has been but half improved—it is only one of her cheeks that has the least proper colour, while the other displays the true pale green tint of secluded study; and even the seeds of influence and usefulness within her are but half matured; but mine will be found as dark as"——

"As the chimney-back?" suggested Carl.

"They are not exactly that colour," replied Beachamwell, "being in fact more like mahogany."

"Well I never saw any of that," said Carl, "so you don't tell me much. Never mind—I shall know when I cut you up. Now, be quick, and tell about Knerly; and then give me all the history of your great, great, great grandfather apple."

"Knerly," said Beachamwell, "was a little cross-grained from the very bud. Before he had cast off the light pink dress which as you know we apples wear in our extreme youth, the dark spot might be seen. It is probable that some poisonous sting may have pierced him in that tender period of his life, and the consequence is, as I have said, some hardness of heart and sourness of disposition. As you see, he has not softened under the sun's influence, though exposed to it all his life; and it is doubtful whether he ever will attain a particle of the true Beachamwell colour. There are, however, good spots in Knerly; and even Half-ripe can be sweet if you only get to the right side of her."

"I'll be sure to do that," said Carl, "for I shall go all round. Come, go on."

"Unfortunately," said Beachamwell, "I cannot give the information which you desire about my respected and venerable ancestors. The pedigree of apples is not always well preserved, and in general the most we can boast of is the family name: nor is that often obtained except by engrafting upon a very different stock. For one generation back, however, we may claim to be true Beachamwells. From root to twig the parent tree was

the right stuff. The remarkable way in which this came about, I am happily able to tell you.

A number of years ago, one Thanksgiving Eve, Widow Penly was washing up the tea things, and her little boy, Mark, sat looking at her.

"I wish we could keep Thanksgiving, mother," said he

"Why, so we will," said his mother.

"But how?" said Mark, with a very brightened face. "What will you do, mother?"

"I'll make you some pies—if I can get anything to make them of," said Mrs. Penly.

"Ah, but you can't," said Mark, his countenance falling again. "There are not even any potatoes in the house. You used to make potato pies, didn't you, mother, when father forgot to bring home the pumpkin?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Penly, but as if she scarce heard him; for other Thanksgiving Days were sweeping across the stage where Memory's troop was just then performing

"So what will you do, mother?" repeated little Mark, when he had watched her again for a few minutes.

"Do?" said the widow, rousing herself. "Why, my dear, if we cannot make any pies we will keep Thanksgiving without them."

"I don't think one can keep Thanksgiving without *anything*," said Mark, a little fretfully.

"Oh no," said his mother, "neither do I; but we will think about it, dear, and do the best we can. And now you may read to me while I mend this hole in your stocking. Read the 103rd Psalm."

So Mark got his little old Bible and began to read:—

"'*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies.*'"

"Don't you think, Mark," said his mother, that we could keep Thanksgiving for at least *one* day with only such blessings as these?"

"Why, yes," said Mark, "I suppose we could, mother —though I wasn't thinking of that."

"No, of course not," said his mother; "and that is the very reason why we so often long for earthly things—we are not thinking of the heavenly blessings that God has showered upon us."

"But mother," said Mark, not quite satisfied, "it goes on to say, '*Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*'"

And Mark looked up as if he thought his mother must be puzzled now, if she never was before.

It did occur to Mrs. Penly, as she glanced at the child, that his cheeks were not very fat, nor his dress very thick; and that a greater plenty of pies and other nourishing things might exert a happy influence upon his complexion; but she stilled her heart with this word, "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of such things."

"I am sure we have a great many good things, Mark," she answered, cheerfully; "don't you remember that barrel of flour that came the other day? and the molasses, and the pickles? We must have as much as is good for us, or God would give us more; for it says in another part of that psalm, 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' I wouldn't keep from you anything that I thought good for you."

"But you are my mother," said Mark, satisfactorily.

"Well," said the widow, "the Bible says that a mother may forget her child, yet will not God forget His children. So you see, dear, that if we have not a great many things which some other people have, it is not because God has forgotten to care for us, but because we are better without them."

"I wonder why," said Mark. "Why should they hurt us any more than other people?"

"God knows," said his mother. "It is so pleasant to have Him choose and direct all for us. If I could have my way, I dare say I should wish for something that would do me harm—just as you wanted to eat blackberries last summer when you were ill."

"But we are not sick," said Mark.

"Yes we are—sick with sin; and sin-sick people must

not have all that their sinful hearts desire; and people who love earth too well must want some of the good things of this world, that they may think more of heaven."

"Well," said Mark, the last thing before he got into bed, "we'll keep Thanksgiving, mother,—you and I; and we'll try to be as happy as we can without pies."

"We may have some pleasant thing that we do not think of," said his mother, as she tucked the clothes down about him.

"Why, what?" said Mark, starting up in an instant. "Where could anything come from, mother?"

"From God in the first place," she answered, "and He can always find a way."

"Mother!" said Mark, "there are a great many apples in the road by Mr. Crab's orchard."

"Well, dear," said his mother, "they don't belong to us."

"But they're in the road," said Mark; "and Mr. Smith's pigs are there all day long eating them."

"We won't help the pigs," said his mother, smiling. "They don't know any better, but we do. I have cause enough for thanksgiving, Marky, in a dear little boy who always minds what I say."

Mark hugged his mother very tight round the neck, and then went immediately to sleep, and dreamed that he was running up a hill after a pumpkin.

But Mark woke up in the morning empty-handed. There were plenty of sunbeams on the bed, and though it was so late in November, the birds sang outside the window as if they had a great many concerts to give before winter, and must make haste.

Mark turned over on his back to have both ears free, and then he could hear his mother and the broom moving up and down the kitchen; and as she swept she sang:—

"Rejoice, the Lord is King!
Your Lord and King adore;
Mortals give thanks and sing,
And triumph evermore;
Lift up your hearts, lift up your voice;
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

"Rejoice in glorious hope,
Jesus the Judge shall come
And take His servants up
To their eternal home;
We soon shall hear th' archangel's voice;
The trump of God shall sound—Rejoice!"

Mark listened a while till he heard his mother stop sweeping and begin to step in and out of the pantry. She was not setting the table, he knew, for that was always his work, and he began to wonder what they were going to have for breakfast. Then somebody knocked at the door.

"Here is a quart of milk, Mrs. Penly," said a voice. "Mother thought she wouldn't churn again before next week, so she could spare it as well as not."

Mark waited to hear his mother pay her thanks and shut the door, and having meanwhile got dressed, he rushed out into the kitchen.

"Is it a whole quart, mother?"

"A whole quart of new milk, Mark. Isn't that good?"

"Delicious!" said Mark. "I should like to drink it all up. I don't mean that I should like to do so really, mother, only on some accounts, you know."

"Well, now, what shall we do with it?" said his mother. "You shall dispose of it all."

"If we had some eggs we would have a pudding," said Mark, "a plum pudding. You can't make it without eggs, can you, mother?"

"Not very well," said Mrs. Penly. "Nor without plums."

"No, so that won't do," said Mark. "It seems to me we could have made more use of it if it had been apples."

"Ah, you are a discontented little boy," said his mother, smiling. "Last night you would have been glad of anything. Now, I advise that you drink a cup of milk for your breakfast"——

"A whole cupful?" interrupted Mark.

"Yes, and another for your tea; and then you will have two left for breakfast and tea to-morrow."

"But then you won't have any of it," said Mark.

"I don't want any."

"But you must have some," said Mark. "Now I'll tell you what, mother. I'll drink a cupful this morning and you shall put some in your tea; and to-night I'll drink some more and you shall have cream, real cream; and what is left I'll drink to-morrow."

"Very well," said his mother. "But now you must run and get washed and dressed, for breakfast is almost ready. I have made you a little shortcake, and it is baking away at a great rate in the oven."

"What is shortcake made of?" said Mark, stopping with the door in his hand.

"This is made of flour and water, because I had nothing else."

"Well, don't you set the table," said Mark, "because I shall be back directly; and then I can talk to you about the milk while I'm putting on your cup, and my cup, and the plates."

It would be hard to tell how much Mark enjoyed his cup of milk—how slowly he drank it—how careful he was not to leave one drop in the cup; while his interest in the dish of milk in the closet was quite as deep. Jack did not go oftener to see how his bean grew, than did Mark to see how his cream rose.

Then he set out to go with his mother to church.

The influence of the dish of milk was not quite so strong when he was out of the house; so many things spoke of other people's dinners that Mark half forgot his own breakfast. He thought he never had seen so many apple trees, nor so many geese and turkeys, nor so many pumpkins, as in that one little walk to church. Again and again he looked up at his mother to ask her sympathy for a little boy who had no apples, nor geese, nor pumpkin pies; but something in the sweet quiet of her face made him think of the psalm he had read last night, and Mark was silent. But after a while his mother spoke:—

"There was once a man, Mark, who had two springs of water near his dwelling. And the furthest off was

always full, but the near one sometimes ran dry. He could always fetch as much as he wanted from the further one, and the water was by far the sweetest; moreover, he could, if he chose, draw out the water of the upper spring in such abundance that the dryness of the lower should not be noticed."

"Were they pretty springs?" said Mark.

"The lower one was very pretty," replied his mother, "only the sunbeams sometimes made it too warm; and sometimes an evil-disposed person would step in and muddy it; or a cloudy sky made it look very dark. Also the flowers which grew by its side could not bear the frost. But when the sun shone, it was beautiful."

"I don't wonder he was sorry to have it dry up, then," said Mark.

"No, it was very natural; though if he drank too much of the water it was apt to make him sick. But the other spring"—— and the widow paused, while her cheek flushed, and on her lips weeping and rejoicing were strangely mingled.

"There was 'a great Rock,' and from this 'the cold flowing waters' came in a bright stream that you could rather hear than see; yet was the cup always filled to the very brim, if it was held there in patient trust, and no one ever knew that spring to fail, yea in the great droughts it was ever full. And the water was life-giving.

"But this man often preferred the lower spring, and would neglect the other when this was full; and if forced to seek the Rock, he was often weary of waiting for his cup to fill, and so drew it away with but a few drops. And he never learned to love the upper spring as he ought, until one year when the very grass by the lower spring was parched, and he fled for his life to the other. And then it happened, Mark," said his mother, looking down at him with her eyes full of tears, "that when the water at last began slowly to run into the lower spring, though it was very lovely, and sweet, and pleasant, it never could be loved *best* again."

"Mother," said Mark, "I don't know *exactly* what you mean, and I do know a little, too."

"Why, my dear," said his mother, "I mean that when we lack anything this world can give, we must fetch the more from heaven."

"You love heaven very much, don't you, mother?" said Mark, looking up at her quite wonderingly.

"More than you love me."

Mark thought that was hardly possible; but he did not like to contradict his mother, and besides, they were now at the church door, and had to go in and take their seats. Mark thought the clergyman chose the strangest text that could be for Thanksgiving Day, it was this:—

"There is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes."

When church was over, and Mark and his mother were walking home again, they were overtaken by little Tom Crab.

"Come," said little Tom, "let us go and sit on the fence and eat apples. We shan't have dinner to-day till ever so late, because it takes so long to get it ready; and I am so hungry. What are you going to have for dinner?"

"I don't know," said Mark.

"I know what we are going to have," said Tom, "only I can't remember everything. It makes me worse than ever to think of it. Come—let us go and eat apples."

"I have not got any," said Mark.

"Haven't got any!" said Tom, dropping Mark's elbow and staring at him—for the idea of a boy without apples had never before occurred to any of Mr. Crab's family. "Oh, you mean you have eaten up all you had in your pocket?"

"No," said Mark, "we haven't had any this year. Last year Mr. Smith gave us a basketful."

"Well, come along, and I'll give you some," said Tom. "I've got six, and I think three will do for me till dinner. "Oh, Mark! you ought to see the goose roasting in our kitchen? I'll tell you what—I think I may as well give you the whole six, because I can run home and get some more; and I might as well be at home,

too, for they might have dinner earlier than they meant to have it."

And filling Mark's pockets out of his own, Tom ran off.

"It so happened," said Beachamwell, turning herself round with a tired air when she got to this point in her story, "it so happened, that Mark, having stopped so long to talk with Tommy Crab, did not get home till his mother had her things off and the table-cloth laid; and then, being in a great hurry to help her, and a rather heedless little boy besides, there being, moreover, but one table in the room, Mark laid his six apples upon the sill of the window which was open. For it was a soft autumn day —the birds giving another concert in the still air, and the sunshine lying warm and bright upon everything. The apples looked quite brilliant as they lay in the window, and as Mark ate his queer little Thanksgiving dinner of bread and a bit of corned beef, he looked at them from time to time with great pleasure.

But when it was almost time for the apples to come on table as dessert, Mark suddenly cried out, "Mother! where are my six apples?"

"Why, on the window-sill," said his mother.

"There are but five! there are but five!" said Mark. "I must have lost one coming home! No, I didn't, either." And running to the window, Mark looked out. There lay the sixth apple on the ground, appropriated as the Thanksgiving dinner of his mother's two chickens.

Mark could hardly keep from crying.

"It is *too* bad," he said, "when I had but six! The ugly things!"

"You called them beauties this morning," said his mother.

"But just see my apple," said Mark; "all dirty and pecked to pieces."

"And just see my little boy," said his mother, "all red and angry. Did you suppose, my dear, that if apples rolled off the window-sill, they would certainly fall inside?"

"I will take care, I'll never put anything there any more," said Mark, gathering up the five apples in his

arms and letting them all fall again. But they fell inside this time, and rolled over the floor.

"You had better decide how many apples you will eat now," said Mrs. Penly, "and then put the others away in the closet."

"It is too bad!" said Mark. "I had but six; and I thought you would have three and I should have three."

"Well, you may have five," said his mother, smiling, "the chickens have got my part. And some good may come of that yet, if it only teaches you to be careful."

"Oddly enough," said Beachamwell, "some good did come of it. When the chickens pecked the apple to pieces, the seeds fell out, and one seed crept under a clover leaf where the chickens could not find it. And when the snow had lain all the winter upon the earth, and the spring came, this little seed sprouted and grew, and sent down roots, and sent up leaves, and became an apple tree."

"How soon?" said Carl.

"Oh, in the course of years, by the time Mark was a great boy. And the tree blossomed and bore fruit; and from that time Mark and his mother never wanted for apples. He called it the 'Thanksgiving tree;' but it was a true Beachamwell, for all that."

"But stay!" exclaimed Carl, catching hold of Beachamwell's stem in his great interest, "Mark isn't alive now, is he?"

"No," said Beachamwell, twisting away from Carl and her stem together. "No, he is not alive now, but the tree is, and it belongs to Mark's grandson. And the other day he picked a whole waggon-load of us, and set off to market; and we three were so tired of jolting about, that we rolled out and lay by the wayside. Thus it was that your mother found us."

"Well, that is certainly a very pretty story," said Carl; "but nevertheless, I'm glad my stocking was full. Now I will let you, Beachamwell, and Half-ripe, and Knerly, lie on the chest and hear the rest of the stories, for I like this one very much."

Carl was tired of sitting still by this time, so he went out and ran about on the beach till dinner time; and after dinner he went up to his corner again.

The sun came in through the little window, looking askance at Carl's treasures, and giving a strange, old-fashioned air to purse, and book, and stocking. The shoes looked new yet, and shone in their blacking, and the apples had evidently but just quitted the tree; while the bright penny gleamed away in the fair light, and the old pine cone was brown as ever, and reflected not one ray. Carl handled one thing and another, and then his eye fell on his small portion of money. He might want to spend it; therefore, if the penny could do anything, it must be done at once; and as he thought on the subject, the sun shone in brighter and brighter, and the face of the penny looked redder and redder. Then the sunbeam fled away, and only a dark little piece of copper lay on the chest by the side of the new shoes.

"Now, penny," said Carl, "it is your turn. I will hear you before the purse, so make haste."

"Turn me over, then," said the penny, "for I can't talk with my back to the people."

So Carl turned him over, and there he lay and stared at the ceiling.

THE STORY OF THE PENNY.

I CANNOT begin to relate my history, said the penny, without expressing my astonishment at the small consideration in which I am held. "I wouldn't give a penny for it!"—"It isn't worth a penny!" such are the expressions which we continually hear; and yet truly a man might as well despise the particles of flour that make up his loaf of bread.

People say it is pride in me; that may be, and it may not. But if it be, why should not a penny have at least that kind of pride which we call self-respect? I was made to be a penny, I was wanted to be a penny, I was never expected to be anything else, therefore why should I be mortified at being only a penny? I am all that I

was intended to be, and a silver shilling can be no more. Pride, indeed! why even Beachamwell here is proud, I dare say, and only because she is not a russet; while I think—Well, never mind, I have bought a great many apples in my day and ought to know something about them. *Only* a penny! People cannot bargain so well without me, I can tell you. Just go into the market to buy a cabbage, or into the street to buy a newspaper, and let me stay at home; see how you will fare then. Indeed, when there is a question about parting with me, I am precious enough in some people's eyes, but it hardly makes up for the abuse I get from other quarters. There is indeed one rather large class of the community who always think me worth picking up, though they are over ready to part with me. To them alone would I unfold the secrets of my past life. I might have lain mute in a man's purse for ever, and rubbed down all the finer parts of my nature against various hard-headed coins; but there is something in the solitude of a boy's pocket which touches all the sympathies of our nature, even beforehand.

I am not, however, continued the penny, I am not at all of friend Beachamwell's temperament,—in fact, I never had but one impression made on me in my life. To be sure that was permanent, and such as only Time can efface; though no doubt he will one day soften down my most prominent points, and enable me to move through society with a calm and even exterior. For it happens, oddly enough, that while beneath the pressure of years "the human face divine" grows wrinkled and sometimes sharp, a penny grows smooth and polished,—a little darker and thinner perhaps than formerly, but with as good business faculties as ever.

When that time arrives, said the penny, we refuse to tell our age; but until then we are perfectly communicative. I would at once tell you how old I am, but that you can see for yourself.

I shall not give you a detailed account of my origin, nor of the fire and water through which I passed in order to become a penny. If, when you grow up, you are

still curious about the matter, you can travel over to England. Down in Cornwall, you will find what may be called my birthplace, and learn, with full particulars, why I left it. Neither shall I relate how I was pressed, and clipped, and weighed, at the Mint, nor speak of the first few times that I went to market and changed hands. My present history will begin with the pocket of a rich old gentleman, into which I found my way one afternoon, along with a large variety of the "circulating medium."

"You do use such big words!" said Carl.

"Because I have travelled a great deal," said the penny. "It is the fashion. But to return to the pocket."

What a pocket it was!

At the bottom lay an overfed pocket-book, bursting with bank bills new and old, while another of like dimensions held more value, snugly stowed away in notes and bonds. The latter purse in which I lay had one end for pence and the other for gold and silver; but with my usual love of bright company, when the old gentleman slipped me in among a parcel of dingy pence, I slipped out again, and ran in among the half-sovereigns. For I was the only new penny the old gentleman had, and as by right I belonged about half to him and half to the bank, the cashier and he had some words as to which should carry me off. I believe the old gentleman chuckled over me half the way home.

If this part of my story teaches nothing else, said the penny, with a moralising air, as he stared at the ceiling, it will at least show the folly of going out of one's proper place. Had I been content to lodge with the pence, I should have been set to do a penny's work,—as it was I was made to do the work of shillings, for which I was totally unfit. It fell out thus.

The old gentleman walked leisurely home, having very much the air of a man with a pocket full of money,—as I should think from the deliberate and comfortable way in which we were jolted about; and when he rang his own door bell it was already quite dark. A dear little girl opened the door, dressed in a white frock and black apron.

"Oh, grandpa," she said, "I am so glad you are come, because a little boy has been waiting here ever so long for five shillings."

"Well, my dear," said the old gentleman, "five shillings are worth waiting for."

"But he is in a great hurry to get home before dark, because he says the children have no bread for supper till he buys it," said the little girl. "He brought a pair of boots and shoes for you, grandpa, and his father is very poor."

"Is he?" said the old gentleman. "Then I am afraid my boots won't be mended properly. However, Fanny, my dear, you may take him the money for them, if you like."

"Shall I fetch you a light, grandpa?" said the child. "It is too dark to see."

"No, no—not a bit of it,—I know how a crown feels, well enough. He shall have a crown for once in his life, at all events."

And opening the most precious end of his purse, the old gentleman's unerring thumb and finger drew forth *me*, and laid me in the little girl's open palm. The soft little hand closed upon me, and down she ran to the lower entrance.

"There," she said, "there it is. Grandpa has sent you a crown. Have you got a great many little brothers and sisters?"

"This isn't a crown," said the boy, too busy examining me to heed her last question. "He has made a mistake —this is only a penny."

"Oh, well, I will take it back to him, then," said the little messenger. "I suppose he could not see in the dark." And away she ran.

The old gentleman by this time was enjoying his slippers and the newspaper, between a blazing fire and two long candles in tall silver candlesticks.

"Grandpa," said the child, laying her hand on his knee, "do you know what you did in the dark? You gave that boy a penny instead of a crown—was it not funny?"

"Hey! what?" said the old gentleman, moving his

paper far enough on one side to see the little speaker, "gave him a penny instead of a crown? Nonsense!"

"But you did, grandpa," urged the child. "See here—he gave it back to me. It was so dark, you know, and he took it to the window to look; and he said directly it was only a penny."

"Which he had kept in his hand for the purpose, I'll warrant," said the old man. "Took it to the window, did he?—yes, to slip it into his pocket. He need not think to play off that game upon me."

"But only look at it, grandpa," said the child,—"see—it is only a penny. I'm sure he did not change it."

"I don't want to look at it," said he, putting away her hand. "All stuff, my dear—it was as good a piece as ever came out of the mint. Don't I know the feel of one? and did I not take it out of the end of my purse where I *never* put copper? Bad boy, no doubt—you must not go back to him. Here, William"—

"But he looked good, grandpa," said the child, "and so sorry."

"He will look sorry now, I'll be bound," said the old man. "I say, William!—take this penny back to that boy and tell him to be off with it, and not to show his face here again."

The command was strictly obeyed; and my new owner, after a vain attempt to move the waiter, carried me into the street and sat down on the next door-step. Never in my life have I felt so grieved at being only a penny, as then.

The boy turned me over and over, and looked at me and read my date, with a bewildered air, as if he did not know what he was doing; and I, alas, who could have testified to his honesty, had no voice to speak.

At length he seemed to comprehend his loss; for, dropping me on the pavement, he sunk his head on his hands, and the hot tears fell fast down from his face upon mine. Then, in a sudden passion of grief and excitement, he caught me up and threw me from him as far as he could; and I, who had been too proud to associate with pence, now fell to the very bottom of an in-

glorious heap of mud. As I lay there, half smothered, I could hear the steps of the boy, who, soon repenting his hastiness, now sought me—inasmuch as I was better than nothing; but he sought in vain. He could not see me and I could not see him, especially as there was little but lamp light to see by, and he presently walked away.

I am not good at reckoning time, said the penny, but I should think I might have lain there about a week—the mud heap having in the meantime changed to one of dust—when a furious shower arose one afternoon, or, I should rather say, came down; and not only were dust and mud swept away, but the rain even washed my face for me, and left me almost as bright as ever, high and dry upon a clean paving-stone.

I felt so pleased and refreshed with being able to look about once more, that of what next would become of me I hardly thought; and very wet and shiny I lay there, basking in the late sunshine.

"I thought you said you were high and dry," said Carl.

"That is a phrase which we use," replied the penny. "I was high and dry in one sense—quite lifted above the little streams of water that gurgled about among the paving-stones, though the rain-drops were not wiped off my face: and as I lay there I suddenly felt myself picked up by a most careful little finger and thumb, which had no desire to get wet or muddy. They belonged to a little girl about ten years old."

"You pretty penny," she said admiringly—"how bright and nice you do look! and how funny it is that I should find you! I never found anything before. I wonder how you came here—I hope some poor child didn't lose you."

While she thus expressed her opinion I was busy making up mine, and truly it was a pleasant one. Her cotton frock was of an indescribable brown, formed by the fading together of all the bright colours that had once enlivened it—water and soap, and long wear, had done this. But water and soap had also kept it clean, and a very little starch spread it into some shape, and displayed the peculiar brown to the best advantage. In-

stead of an old straw bonnet with soiled ribbons, she had a neat little sun-bonnet; but this being made of a piece of new pink cotton, made her face look quite rosy. I could not see her feet and shoes, for my back was towards them, but I have no doubt they were in nice order—she was too nice a child to have it otherwise. Her hair was brushed quite smooth, only when she stooped to pick me up one lock had fallen down from under the sun-bonnet, and her face was as simple and good as it could be. With what contented eyes did she look at me!—she did not wish she had found a piece of gold—indeed I thought it doubtful whether she had ever heard of such a thing. But I saw that her cheeks were thin, and that they might have been pale but for the pink sun-bonnet. Whatever *she* meant by "a poor child," little Fanny would surely have given the name to her.

Suddenly she exclaimed—"Now I can get it! Oh, I am so glad! Come, little penny, I must give you away, though I should like to keep you very much, for you are very pretty; but you are all the money I have got in the world."

Now for the candy-shop, thought I; for as she turned and began to walk away as fast as she could, I peeped into the little basket that hung on her arm and saw there a small loaf of bread—so I knew I was not to go for that commodity. She did not put me in the basket, but kept me fast in her hand as she tripped along, till we came to a large grocer's shop. There she went in.

"Please, sir, to let me have a pennyworth of tea," she said, timidly.

"Got sixpence to pay for it?" said one of the shopmen, to make the other shopmen laugh, in which he succeeded.

"No, sir, I have got this," she said, modestly showing me, and giving me a kind glance at the same time. "It is only a penny, but it will get enough for mother, and she is ill and wanted some tea so much."

The young men stopped laughing, and looked at the child as if she had just come out of the museum; and one of them taking down a canister, measured out two

or three good pinches of tea into a brown paper and folded it up. The child took it with a very glad face, laying me down on the counter with a joyful "Thank you, sir," which I by no means repeated, I wanted to go home with her and see that tea made. But we pence can never know the good that our purchases do in the world.

The shopman took me up and balanced me upon his finger, as if he had half a mind to give the child back her money, and pay the sum of one penny into the till out of his own private purse. But habit prevailed; and dropping me into the till, I heard him remark as he closed it, "I say, Bill, I have no doubt now that is a good child."

I had no doubt either.

We were a dull company in the till that night, for most of the money was old; and it is a well-known fact that worn-out coins are not communicative. And some of the pieces were rusty through long keeping, and one disconsolate little sixpence which sat alone in the furthest corner of the till was in a very sad state of mind; for he had just laid himself out to buy some rice for a poor family and now could do nothing more for them—and he was the last moneyed friend they had.

In this inactive kind of life some time passed away, and though some of us were occasionally taken to the market, yet we never bought anything. But one evening a man came into the grocer's shop and asked for starch, and we hoped for bright visitors; but I had no time to enjoy them, for I was sent to make change. The messenger was a man-servant; and with the starch in his hand, and me in his pocket, he soon left the shop and went whistling along the street. Then he put his other hand into the pocket, and jingled me against the rest of the change in a most unpleasant manner—picking me up and dropping me again, just as if pence had no feeling. I was glad when he reached home, and ran down the area steps and into the kitchen. He gave the starch to the cook, and then marking down on a little bit of paper what he had bought and what he had spent, he carried it with the change into the parlour. But what was my

surprise to find that I was in the very same house from whence I had gone forth as a crown-piece!

The old gentleman was asleep in his chair now, and a pretty-looking lady sat by, reading; while the little girl was playing with her doll on the rug. She jumped up, and came to the table and began to count the change.

"Two and sixpence, mamma—see, here are a shilling and two sixpences, and fivepence, and a penny. Mamma, may I have this penny?"

"It is not mine, Fanny—your grandfather gave James the money."

"Well, but you can pay him again," said the child; "and besides, he would let me have it, I know."

"What will you do with it, Fanny?"

"Don't you know, mamma, you said you thought you would give me one penny a month to spend?"

"To do what you liked with," said her mother. "Yes, I remember. But what will you do with this one?"

"Oh, I don't know, mamma—I shall see if grandpa will let me have it."

"Let you have what?" said the old gentleman, waking up.

"This penny, grandpa."

"To be sure you may have it! Of course!—and fifty more."

"No, she must have but one," said the lady, with a smile. "I am going to give her an allowance of one penny a month."

"Fiddle-de-dee!" said the old gentleman. "What can she do with that, I should like to know?—one penny—absurd!"

"Why, she can do just the thirtieth part of what she could with half-a-crown," said the lady, "and that will be money matters enough for such a little head. So you may take the penny, Fanny, and spend it as you like; only I shall wish to be told about it afterwards."

Fanny thanked her mother, and holding me fast in one hand she sat down on the rug again by her doll. The old gentleman seemed very much amused.

"What will you do with it, Fanny?" he said, bending down to her. "Buy candy?"

Fanny smiled and shook her head.

"No, I think not, grandpa—I don't know—I'll see. Perhaps I shall buy beads."

At which the old gentleman leaned back in his chair and laughed very heartily.

From that time, whenever little Fanny went to walk, I went too, and she really seemed to be quite fond of me; for though she often stopped before the candy shops or the toy shops, and once or twice went in to look at the beads, yet she always carried me home again.

"Mamma, I don't know how to spend my penny," she said, one day.

"Are you tired of taking care of it, Fanny?"

"No, mamma, but I want to spend it."

"Why?"

"Why, mamma—I don't know—money is made to spend, is it not?"

"Yes, it is made to be spent—not to be thrown away."

"Oh, no," said Fanny, "I would not throw away my penny for anything. It is a very pretty penny."

"How many ways are there of throwing away money?" said her mother.

"O mamma—a great many! I could not begin to count. You know I might throw it out of the window, mamma, or drop it in the street—or somebody might steal it; no, then it would only be lost."

"Or you might shut it up in your box and never spend it."

"Why, mamma!" said Fanny, opening her eyes very wide, "would it be thrown awy then?"

"Certainly—you might just as well have none. It would do neither you nor any one else any good."

"But I should have it to look at."

"But that is not what money was made for. Your penny would be more really lost than if you threw it out of the window, for then some poor child might pick it up."

"How surprised she would be!" said Fanny, with a very bright face. "Mamma, I think I should like to spend my money so. I could stand behind the window-curtain and watch."

Her mother smiled.

"Why, mamma? do you think there would not be any poor child passing by?"

"I should like to see that day, dear Fanny. But your penny might fall into the grass in the courtyard, or into the mud, or a horse might tread it down among the paving-stones; and then no one would be the better for it."

"But it is only one penny, mamma," said Fanny,—"it does not matter so much after all."

"Come here, Fanny," said her mother, and the child came and stood at her side. The lady opened her purse, and took out a little gold piece.

"What is this made of?" said she.

"Why, of gold, mamma."

"Think again."

So Fanny thought, and could not tell, while she leaned her head against her mother, and played with the little gold coin. Then she laid it upon me to see how much smaller it was, and how much brighter. Then she cried out, "Oh, I know now, mamma! it is made of a hundred and twenty pence."

"Then if every day you lose 'only a penny,' in one year you would have lost more than a sovereign and a half. That might do a great deal of good in the world."

"How strange that is," said Fanny. "Well, I will try and not lose my penny, mamma."

"There is another reason for not losing it," said her mother. "In one sense it would make little difference whether or not I threw this little gold piece into the fire —you see there are plenty more in my purse. But, Fanny, they do not belong to me." And taking up a Bible she read these words—"The silver and gold are the Lord's."

"Do you think, Fanny, that it pleases Him if we waste or spend foolishly what He has given us to do good with?"

"No, mamma; I won't get my beads, then," said Fanny, with a little sigh.

"That would not be waste," said her mother, kissing

her. "It is right to spend some of our money for harmless pleasure, and we will go and buy the beads this very afternoon."

So after dinner they set forth.

It was a very cold day, but Fanny and her mother were well wrapped up, so they did not feel it much. Fanny's fur tippet kept all the cold wind out of her neck, and her little muff kept one hand warm while the other was given to her mamma. When that hand got cold, Fanny changed its place, she put it in the muff, and took the other out. As for me, I was in the muff all the time; and I was just wondering to myself what kind of a person the bead-woman would prove to be, when I heard Fanny say—

"Mamma! did you see that little girl on those brown steps? She had no tippet, mamma, and not even a shawl, and her feet were all tucked up in her petticoat; and"——and Fanny's voice faltered—"I think she was crying. I did not look at her much, for it made me feel sad; but I thought so."

"Yes, love," said her mother. "I saw her. How good God has been to me, that it is not my little daughter who is sitting there."

"O mamma!"

Fanny walked on in silence for a few yards—then she spoke again.

"Mamma—I'm afraid a great many poor children want things more than I want my beads."

"I am afraid they do, Fanny."

"Mamma, will you please to go back with me, and let me give that little girl my penny? would she not be pleased, mamma? would she know how to spend it?"

"Suppose you spend it for her, Fanny. People that are cold are very often hungry, too—shall we go to the baker's and buy her something to eat?"

"Oh, yes!" said Fanny. "Will you buy it, mamma, or shall I?"

"You, darling."

And when they reached the shop, Fanny looked round once more at her mother, and opening the shop-door

with a pleased and excited little face, she marched up to the counter.

"If you please, sir," she said, laying me down on the counter, "I want something for a very poor little girl."

The baker was a large fat man, in the whitest of shirt-sleeves and apron, and the blackest pantaloons and vest, over which hung down a heavy gold watch-chain. He put his hands on his sides, and looked at Fanny, and then at me, and then at Fanny again.

"*What* do you want, my dear?" said he.

Fanny looked round to her mother to reassure herself, and repeated her request.

"I want something for a very poor little girl, if you please, sir. She is sitting out in the street all alone." And Fanny's lips were trembling at the remembrance. Her mother's eyes were full, too.

"What will you have, my dear?" said the baker.

Fanny looked up at her mother.

"What would you like if you were hungry?" replied her mother.

"Oh, I should like some bread," said Fanny, "and I am sure the little girl would, too. But all those loaves are too big."

"How would these do?" said the baker, taking some rolls out of a drawer.

"Oh, they are just the thing!" said Fanny, "and I like rolls so much. May I take one, sir? and is a penny enough to pay for it?"

The baker gave a queer little shake of his head, and searching below the counter for a bit of wrapping paper, he laid the two largest rolls upon it.

"A penny is enough to pay for two," he said. "Shall I tie them up for you?"

"No, thank you, sir, you need not tie it—if you will only wrap them up a little. Mamma," said Fanny, turning again to her mother, "I am afraid that poor little girl does not know that 'the silver and gold are the Lord's,' and she will only think that I gave it to her."

"You can tell her, Fanny, that everything we have comes from God," said her mother; and they left the shop.

"What a nice little girl!" said Carl. "I think I should like to marry that little girl when I grow up—if I was good enough."

The baker went into the back room, continued the penny, to tell the story to his wife, and I was left to my own reflections on the counter; but I had reason to be well satisfied, for it was certainly the largest pennyworth I had ever bought in my life. But while I lay there thinking about it, a boy came into the shop; and seeing me, he caught me up and ran out again. At least, he was running out, when he tripped and fell; and as I am noted for slipping through people's fingers, I slipped through his, and rolled to the furthest corner of the shop. There I lay all night, and in the morning, when the baker's boy was sweeping the floor, he found me and put me in the till, for he was honest. But just then, Mr. Krinken came in with a string of fish, and the careless creature gave me, with some other change, for a parcel of miserable flounders. That is the way I came here.

"Why was he a careless boy?" said Carl. "I think he was very careful, to find you at all."

"Oh, because I did not want to quit the baker, I suppose," said the penny. "And I don't like the smell of fish,—it does not agree with me."

"You won't smell much of it when I've kept you a little while in my purse," said Carl. "I'll take good care of you, penny, and I won't spend you till I want something."

The next day Carl had tired himself with a run on the sands. He used to tuck up his trousers as high as they would go, and wade slowly in through the deepening water, to pick up stones and shells, and feel the little waves splash about his legs. Then, when a larger wave than usual came rolling in, black and high, to break further up on the shore than the other great waves did,

Carl would run for it, shouting and trampling through the water, to see if he could not get to land before the breaker which came rolling and curling so fast after him. Sometimes he did; and sometimes the billow would curl over and break just a little behind him, and a great sea of white foam would rush on over his shoulders and perhaps half hide his own curly head. Then Carl laughed louder than ever. He did not mind the wetting with salt water. And there was no danger, for the shore was very gently shelving and the sand was white and hard; and even if a large wave caught him up off his feet and cradled him in towards the shore, which sometimes happened, it would just leave him there, and never think of taking him back again; which the waves on some beaches would certainly do.

All this used to occur in the summer weather; at Christmas it was rather too cold to play with the breakers in any fashion. But Carl liked their company, and amused himself in front of them, this sunny December day, for a long time. He got tired at last; and then sat himself down on the sand, out of reach of the water, to rest and think what he should do next. There he sat, his trousers still tucked up as far as they would go, his little bare legs stretched out towards the water, his curls crisped and wetted with a dash or two of the salt wave, and his little ruddy face sober and thoughtful,—pleasantly resting, and gravely thinking what should be the next play. Suddenly he jumped up, and the two little bare feet pattered over the sand and up on the bank, till he reached the hut.

"What ails the child?" exclaimed Mrs. Krinken.

But Carl did not stop to tell what. He ran to the cupboard; and climbed up on a chair, and drew forth with some trouble, from behind everything, a clumsy wooden box. This box held nobody's treasures but his own. A curious boxful it was. Carl soon picked out his Christmas purse; and without looking at another thing shut the box, pushed it back, closed the cupboard door, and getting down from his chair, ran back, purse in hand, the way he came; the little bare feet pattering

over the sand, till he reached the place where he had been sitting; and then down he sat again just as he was before, stretched out his legs towards the sea, and put the purse down upon the sand between them.

"Now, purse," said he, "I'll hear your story. Come, —begin."

"I don't feel inclined for story-telling," said the purse. "I have been opening and shutting my mouth all my life, and I'm tired of it."

The purse looked very snappish.

"Why, you wouldn't be a purse if you could not open and shut your mouth," said Carl.

"Very true," said the other; "but one may be tired of being a purse. I am."

"Why?" said Carl.

"My life is a failure."

"I don't know what that means," said Carl.

"It means that I never have been able to do what I was meant to do, and what I have all my life been trying to do."

"What is that?" said Carl.

"To keep money."

"You shall keep my penny for me," said Carl.

"Think of that! A penny! anything might hold a penny. I am of no use in the world."

"Yes, you are," said Carl,—"to carry my penny."

"You might carry it yourself," said the purse.

"No, I couldn't," said Carl. "My pockets are full."

"You might lose it, then. It is of no use to keep one penny. You might as well have none."

"No I mightn't," said Carl; "and you must keep it; and you must tell me your story, too."

"You may lose me," said the purse. "I wish your mother had."

"No, I shan't lose you," said Carl; and he lifted up his two legs on each side of the purse, and slapped them down in the sand again; "I shan't lose you."

"It would not be the first time," said the purse.

"Were you ever lost?" said Carl.

"Certainly I was."

"Then how did you get here?"

"That is the end of my story—not the beginning."

"Well make haste and begin," said Carl.

"The first place in which I was settled was a large fancy shop in London," the purse began.

"Where were you before that?" said Carl.

"I was in one or two rooms where such things are made, and where I was made."

"Where were you before that?"

"I was not a purse before that. I was not anywhere."

"What are you made of?" said Carl, shortly.

"My sides are made of sealskin, and my studs and clasp are silver."

"Where did the sides and the clasp come from?"

"How should I know?" said the purse.

"I thought you knew," said Carl.

"No, I don't," said the purse.

"Well, go on," said Carl. "What did you do in that large shop?"

"I did nothing. I lay in a drawer, shut up with a parcel of other purses."

"Were they all sealskin with silver clasps?"

"Some of them; and some were morocco leather with steel clasps."

"I'm glad you have got silver clasps," said Carl,—"you look very bright."

For Mrs. Krinken had polished up the silver of the clasp and of every stud along the seams, till they shone again.

"I feel very dull now," said the purse; "but in those days I was as bright as a butterfly, and as handsome. My sides were a beautiful bright red."

"I don't believe it," said Carl; "they are not red a bit now."

"That is because I have been rubbed about in the world till all my first freshness is worn off. I am an old purse, and have seen a great deal of wear and tear."

"You are not torn a bit," said Carl.

"If you don't shut your mouth, I will," said the purse.

"I will," said Carl; "but you must go on."

"My next place was in a gentleman's pocket."

"How did you get there?"

"He came to buy a purse, and so a number of us were thrown out upon the counter, and he looked at us and tried us, and bought me and put me in his pocket."

"What did you do there?"

"There my business was to hold guineas and half guineas, and crowns and half crowns, and all sorts of beautiful pieces of silver and gold."

"And pence?" said Carl.

"No, not one. My master had not any. He threw all his pennies away as fast as he got them."

"Threw them away! where?" said Carl.

"Anywhere—to little boys, and beggars, and poor people, and gate-openers, and such like."

"Why did he not keep them?"

"He had enough besides—gold and silver. He did not want pennies and halfpennies.

"I wish you had kept some of them," said Carl.

"I never had them to keep. I could only keep what he gave me, and not even that. He was always taking out and putting in."

"Did he wear the red off?" said Carl.

No; I did not stay long enough with him. He was travelling in some part of England, with a friend, riding over a wide lonely plain one day; and they saw at a little distance before them a cow in the road, lying down, across their path. "Stapleton," said my master, "let us clear that cow." "Can't your servant do that?" said Mr. Stapleton. "Do what?" said my master. "Clear that beast from the road," said his friend. "Pshaw!" said my master,—"I mean, let us clear her at a bound. Leave her in quiet possession of the road, and let us take a jump over her back." "Suppose she took a stupid notion to get out of the way just as we are in hers," said Mr. Stapleton. "I don't suppose anything of the sort," said my master; "we shall be too quick for her." With that they put spurs to their horses, but it happened that Mr. Stapleton's horse got the start and was a little forward. *He* cleared the cow well enough, but unluckily it

gave her an impression that just where she lay was a dangerous place to be in; and she was throwing up her hind legs at the very minute my master came to take the leap. He was flung over and over, he and his horse, over and under each other—I don't know how. I only know my master was killed.

His friend and his servant picked him up and laid him by the road-side; and while Mr. Stapleton went full speed to the nearest town to get help, the other stayed behind to take care of his master and do what could be done for him. But he very soon found that nothing could be done for him; and then, as nobody was in sight, he took the opportunity to do what he could for himself, by rifling his master's pockets. He pulled out several things which I suppose he did not dare to keep, for he put them back again after a careful look at them, and after carefully taking off some seals from the watch chain. I did not fare so well. He had me in his hands a long time, taking out and putting in silver and gold pieces; afraid to keep too much, and not willing to leave a crown that might be kept safely; when a sudden step was heard near, and the bursting out of a loud whistle startled him. He jumped as if he had been shot, which was natural enough, as he was running a pretty good chance of being hanged. I was dropped, or thrown behind him in the grass; and before the countryman who came up had done asking questions, the horses of Mr. Stapleton and his assistants were seen over the rising ground. They carried away my unfortunate master, and left me in the grass.

I knew I should not stay there long, but I was picked up sooner than I hoped. Before the evening had closed in, while the sun was yet shining, I heard the tread of light feet,—somebody coming near the road and then crossing it. In crossing, this somebody came just upon me; and a kind sunbeam touching one of my silver points, I embraced the opportunity to shine as brightly as I could. People say it is dangerous to have bright parts; I am sure I never found it out. I shone so she could not help seeing me. It was a girl about fifteen or

sixteen years old; very tidy in her dress, with a thin figure, and light brown hair nicely put back from her face, and that face a very quiet sweet one. She looked at me, inside and out, looked up and down the road, as if to see where I had come from, and finally put me in her pocket. I was very glad nobody was in sight anywhere, for I knew by her face she would have given me up directly. She left the road then, and went forward over the common, which was a wide, lonely, barren plain, grass-grown, with here and there a branch of bushes or a low stunted tree. She was going after her cows, to bring them home; and presently seeing them in the distance, she stood still and began to call them.

"How did she call them?" said Carl.

"'Cuff, Cuff, Cuff!'—That was while they were a long way off; when they came near,—'Sukey,' and 'Bessie,' and 'Jenny.'"

"And did they come when she called?"

"They left off eating as soon as they heard her; and then, after they had looked a little while, to make sure it was she, they set off slowly to come up to her."

"How many cows were there?" said Carl.

Sukey was a great black cow, and always marched first. Dolly was a beautiful red cow, and always came second. Three more followed in a line, and when they got up to their little mistress she set off to go home, and the whole five of them followed gravely in order.

The common was smooth and wide, and much broken with ups and downs, and little foot-paths—or cow-paths—tracking it in all directions. We wound along, my mistress and the cows, and I in my mistress's pocket, through one and another of these; passing nothing in the shape of a house, but a large gloomy-looking building at some distance, which I afterwards found was a factory. A little way beyond this, not more than a quarter of a mile, we came to a small brown house, with one or two out-buildings. The house stood in a little field and the out-buildings in another little field, close beside it. Everything was small; house, and barn, and shed, and cow-field, and garden-field; but it was all snug and neat, too.

"My little mistress—for she was slender, fair, and good, and such people we always call little"—

"But she wasn't large, was she?" said Carl.

"She was not as large as if she had been grown up, neither was she little for fifteen or sixteen. She was just right. She opened a gate of the barn yard, and held it, while all the five cows marched slowly in, looking around them as if they expected to see some change made in the arrangements since they had gone out in the morning. But the old shed and manger stood just where they had left them, and Sukey stopped quietly in the middle of the barn-yard, and began to chew the cud, and Dolly, and Bessie, and Beauty took their stand in different places after her example; while Whiteface went off to see if she could find something in the mangers. She was an old cow that never seemed to have had enough."

"Was Beauty a handsome cow?" said Carl.

"No; she was the ugliest of the whole set; one of her horns was broken, and the other lopped down directly over her left eye."

"What was she called Beauty for, then?"

"Why, I heard that she had been a very pretty calf, and was named Beauty in her youth; but when she grew older, she took to fighting, and broke one of her horns; and the other horn bent itself down just in the wrong place. There is no knowing, while they are little, how calves or children will turn out."

When their mistress had shut the gate upon the five cows, she opened another small gate in the fence of the field where the house stood; and there she went in, through two beds of roses and sweet herbs that were on each side of the narrow walk, up to the door. That stood open to let her in.

It was the nicest place you ever saw. A clean-scrubbed floor, with a thick coarse piece of carpet covering the middle of it: a dark wooden table and wooden chairs, neat and in their places; only one chair stood on the hearth as if somebody had just left it. There was a large, wide, comfortable fireplace, with a fire burning in it, and

over the fire hung a large iron tea-kettle, in the very midst of the flames, and singing already. On each side of the chimney, brown wooden cupboards filled up the whole space from the floor to the ceiling. All tidy and clean. The hearth looked as if you might have baked cakes on it.

The girl stood a minute before the fire, and then went to the inner door and called, "Mother!"

A pleasant voice from somewhere said,—"Here!"

"In the milk room?"

"Yes."

And my little mistress went along a short passage,—brown it was also, walls and floor, and all, even the beams overhead, to the milk room; and that was brown too,—as sweet as a rose.

"Mother, why did you put on the tea-kettle?"

"Because I wanted to have some tea, dear."

"But I would have done it."

"Yes, honey, I know. You've quite enough to do."

"Look here, what I have found, mother."

"Can't look at anything, daughter. Go along and milk, and I will hear you at tea-time."

Then my little mistress took up her pails and went out by another way, through another gate that opened directly into the cows' yard; and there she milked the yellow sweet milk into the pails, from every one of the five cows she had driven home. All of them loved to be milked by her hand; they enjoyed it, every cow of them; standing quietly and sleepily munching the cud, excepting when now and then one of them would throw back her head furiously at some fly on her side, and then my mistress's soft voice would say—

"So, Beauty."

And Beauty was as good as possible to her, though I have heard that other people did not find her so.

Mrs. Meadows took the milk pails at the dairy door, and my mistress came back into the kitchen to get tea. She put up a leaf of the brown table, and set a tray on it, and out of one of the cupboards she fetched two tea-cups and saucers; so I knew there were no more in the

family. Then two little blue-edged plates and horn-handled knives, and the rest of the things; and when the tea was made, she made up the fire, and stood looking at it and the tea-table by turns, till her mother showed herself at the door, and came in, taking off her apron. She was the nicest looking woman you ever saw.

"She wasn't as nice as my mother," said Carl.

"Mrs. Krinken was never half so nice. She was the best-natured, most cheerful, pleasant-faced woman you could find, as bright as one of her own red apples."

"Mine are bright," said Carl.

"Yours are bright for Christmas, but hers were bright for every day. Everything about her was bright. Her spoons, and the apples, and the brass candlesticks, and the milk pans, and the glass in the window, and her own kind heart. The mother and daughter had a very cosy tea; and I was laid upon the table, and my story told, or rather the story of my being found; and it was decided that I should remain in the keeping of the finder, whom her mother, by some freak of habit, rarely called anything but 'Silky.'"

"What for?" said Carl.

"You may find out, if you don't ask so many questions," said the purse, snappishly. "It is yours, Silky," Mrs. Meadows said, after looking at me, and rubbing the silver mountings. "How odd such a handsome purse should have no money in it!"

"I am not going to put it away out of sight, mother," said Silky; "I am going to have the good of it. I'll keep it to hold my milk-money."

"Well, dear, this is the first," said Mrs. Meadows;—"here is a silver penny I took for milk while you were gone after the cows."

"Who came for it, mother?"

"I don't know—a lady riding by—and she gave me this."

So a little silver coin was slipped into my emptiness, and my little mistress laid me on a shelf of the other cupboard, alongside of an old Bible. But she left the door a little way open; and I could see them at work,

washing up the tea-things, and then knitting and sewing upon the hearth, both of them by a little round table. By-and-by Mrs. Meadows took the Bible out and read, and then she and Silky knelt down, close together, to pray. They covered up the fire after that, and shut the cupboard door, and went off to bed; and I was left to think what a new place I had come to, and how I liked it.

It was a very great change. In my old master's pocket I had kept company with wealth and elegance,—the tick of his superb watch was always in my ear; now on Mrs. Meadows' cupboard shelf, I had round me a few old books, beside the Bible; an hour-glass; Mrs. Meadows' tin knitting-needle case; a very illiterate inkstand, and stumpy clownish old pen; and some other things that I forget. There I lay, day and night; from thence I watched my two mistresses at their work and their meals; from thence I saw them, every night and morning, kneel together to pray; and there I learned to have a great respect for my neighbour the Bible. I always can tell now what sort of people I have got amongst by the respect they have for it.

"My mother has one," said Carl.

"Her great chest knows that," said the purse. "I have been a tolerably near neighbour of that Bible for ten years; and it rarely gets leave to come out but on Sundays."

"She reads it on Sunday," said Carl.

"Yes, and puts it back before Monday. Mrs. Krinken *means* to be a good woman, but these other people *were* good; there is all the difference."

My business was to lie there on the shelf, and keep the milk pennies, and see all that was going on. Silky sold the milk. The people that came for it were mostly poor people from the neighbouring village, or their children going home from the factory; people that lived in poor little dwellings in the town, without gardens or fields, or a cow to themselves, and just bought a penny or a halfpenny worth at a time—as little as they could do with. There were a great many of these families,

and among them they took a pretty good share of the milk; the rest Mrs. Meadows made up into sweet butter —*honest* sweet butter, she called it, with her bright face and dancing eye; and everything was honest that came out of her dairy.

The children always stopped for milk at night, when they were going home; the grown people, for the most part, came in the morning. After I had been on the cupboard shelf awhile, however, and got to know the faces, I saw there was one little boy who came morning and evening too. In the morning he fetched a half-pennyworth, and in the evening a pennyworth of milk, in a stout little brown jug; always the same brown jug, and always in the morning he wanted a halfpennyworth, and in the evening a pennyworth. He was a small fellow, with a quantity of red hair, and his face all marked with the small-pox. He was one of the poorest looking that came. He was always without a hat on his head; his trousers were fringed with rags; his feet bare of shoes or stockings. His jacket was fastened close up, either to keep him warm, or to hide how very little there was under it. Poor little Norman Finch! That was his name.

He had come for several mornings. One day early, just as Mrs. Meadows and Silky were getting breakfast, his little red head poked itself in again at the door with his little brown jug, and "Please, ma'am,—a hap'orth."

"Why don't you get all you want at once, Norman?" said Silky, when she brought the milk.

"I only want a hap'orth," said Norman.

"But you will want a pennyworth to-night again, won't you?"

"I'll wait for it till then," said Norman, casting his eyes down into the brown jug, and looking more dull than usual.

"Why don't you take it all at once, then?"

"I don't want it."

"Have you got to go home with this before you go to work?"

"No—I must go," said Norman, taking hold of the door.

"Are you going to the factory?"

"Yes, I be."

"How will your mother get her milk?"

"She will get it when I go home."

"But not this, Norman. What do you want this for?"

"I want it—she don't want it," said the boy, looking troubled,—"I must go."

"Do you want it to drink at the factory?"

"No. It is to drink at the factory. She don't want it," said Norman.

He went off. But as Silky set the breakfast on the table she said—

"Mother, I don't understand,—I'm afraid there is something wrong about this morning milk."

"There is nothing wrong about it, honey," said Mrs. Meadows, who had been out of the room. "It is as sweet as a cloverhead. What is the matter?"

"Oh, not the milk, mother; but Norman Finch's coming after it in the morning. He won't tell me what it is for; and they never used to take but a pennyworth a day, and his jug is always empty now at night; and he said it *was* to drink at the factory; and that his mother didn't want it; and I don't know what to think."

"Don't think anything, dear," said Mrs. Meadows, "till we know something more. We'll get the child to tell us, poor little creature! I wish I could keep him out of that place."

"What place, mother?"

"I meant the factory."

"I don't think he can have a good home, mother, in his father's house. I am sure he can't. That Finch is a bad man."

"Poor child," said Mrs. Meadows, "he sees very little of it. It's too much for such a morsel of a creature to work all day long."

"But they are kind at the pin factory, mother. People say they are."

"Mr. Carroll is a kind man," said her mother. "But nine hours is nine hours. Poor little creature!"

"He looks thinner and paler now than he did six months ago."

"Yes, and then it was winter, and now it is summer," said Mrs. Meadows.

"I wish I knew what he wants to do with that milk," said Silky.

The next morning Norman was there again. He put himself and his jug only half in at the door, and said somewhat doubtfully—

"Please, ma'am,—a hap'orth."

"Come in, Norman," said Silky.

He hesitated.

"Come!—come in,—come in to the fire; it is chilly out of doors. You are in good time, aren't you?"

"Yes—but I can't stay," said the boy, coming in, however, and coming slowly up to the fire. But he came close, and his two hands spread themselves to the blaze as if they liked it, and the poor little bare feet shone in the firelight on the hearth. It was early, very cool, and damp abroad.

"I'll get you the milk," said Silky, taking the jug; "you stand and warm yourself. You have plenty of time."

She came back with the jug in one hand and a piece of cold bacon in the other, which she offered to Norman. He looked at it, and then caught it, and began to eat immediately. Silky stood opposite to him with the jug.

"What is this milk for, Norman?" she said, pleasantly.

He stopped eating and looked troubled directly.

"What are you going to do with it?"

"Carry it—home," he said, slowly.

"Now?—home now? Are you going back home with it now?"

"I am going to take it to the factory."

"What do you do with it there?"

"Nothing," said Norman, looking at his piece of bacon and seeming almost ready to cry;—"I don't do nothing with it."

"You need not be afraid to tell me, dear," Silky said,

gently. "I'm not going to do you any harm. Does your mother know you get it?"

He waited a good while, and then when she repeated the question, taking another look at Silky's kind quiet face, he said half under his breath—"No."

"What do you want it for then, dear? I would rather give it to you than have you take it in a wrong way. Do you want it to drink?"

Norman dropped his piece of bacon.

"No," he said, beginning to cry, "I don't want it—I don't want it at all!"

Silky picked up the bacon, and she looked troubled in her turn.

"Don't cry, Norman,—don't be afraid of me. Who does want it?"

"Oh, don't tell!" sobbed the child; "my little dog."

"Now don't cry!" said Silky. "Your little dog?"

"Yes!—my little dog." And he sighed deeply between the words.

"Where is your little dog?"

"He's up yonder—up to the factory."

"Who gave him to you?"

"Nobody didn't give him to me. I found him."

"And this milk is for him?"

"He wants it to drink."

"Does your mother know you get it?"

Norman didn't answer.

"She don't?" said Silky. "Then where does the money come from, Norman?" She spoke very gently.

"It's mine," said Norman.

"Yes, but where do you get it?"

"Mr. Swift gives it to me."

"Is it out of your wages?"

Norman hesitated, and then said "Yes," and began to cry again.

"What is the matter?" said Silky. "Sit down and eat your bacon. I'm not going to get you into trouble."

He looked at her again and took the bacon, but said he wanted to go.

"What for?—it isn't time yet."

"Yes—I want to see my little dog."

"And feed him? Stop and tell me about him. What colour is he?"

"He's white all over."

"What's his name?"

"Little Curly Long-Ears."

"What do you call him?—all that?"

"I call him Long-Ears."

"But why don't you feed him at home, Norman?"

"He lives up there."

"And doesn't he go home with you?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Father wouldn't let him. He would take him away, or do something to him."

Norman looked dismal.

"But where does he live?"

"He lives up at the factory."

"But you can't have him in the factory?"

"Yes I have," said Norman, "because Mr. Carroll said he was to come in because he was so handsome."

"But he will get killed in the machinery, Norman, and then you will be very sorry."

"No, he won't get killed; he takes care; he knows he mustn't go near the machinery, and he doesn't; he just comes and lies down where I be."

"And does Mr. Swift let him?"

"He does let him, because Mr. Carroll said he was to."

"But your money—where does it come from, Norman?"

"Mr. Swift," said Norman, very dismally.

"Then doesn't your mother miss it when you carry home your wages to her?"

"No."

"She *must*, my child."

"She doesn't, because I carry her just the same as I did before."

"How can you, and keep out a ha'penny a day?"

"Because I get more now—I used to have fourpence-ha'penny, and now they give me fi'pence."

And Norman burst into a terrible fit of crying, as if

his secret was out, and it was all up with him and his dog too.

"Give me the milk, and let me go!" he exclaimed through his tears. "Poor Curly!—poor Curly!"

"Here it is," said Silky, very kindly. "Don't cry—I'm not going to hurt you or Curly either. Won't he eat anything but milk? Won't he eat meat?"

"No—he can't."

"Why can't he?"

"He doesn't like it."

"Well; you run off to the factory now, and give Curly his milk, and stop again to-morrow."

"And won't you tell?" said Norman, looking up.

"I shall not tell anybody that will get you into trouble. Run now!"

He dried his tears and ran, fast enough; holding the little brown jug carefully at half-arm's length, and his bare feet pattering over the ground as fast as his short legs could make them.

Silky stood looking gravely after him.

"I'm so sorry for him, mother!" she said. "This won't do; it is very wrong, and he will get himself into dreadful trouble besides."

"Poor fellow! we shall see, honey;—we will try what we can do," said Mrs. Meadows.

The next morning Norman came again, and Mrs. Meadows was there.

"How is Long-Ears, Norman, and how are you?" she said, cheerfully; but she did everything cheerfully.

"He's well," said Norman, looking a little doubtfully at these civilities.

"And you are not well?" said Mrs. Meadows, kindly. "Suppose you come and see me to-morrow?—it is Sunday, you know, and you have no work—will you? Come bright and early, and we will have a nice breakfast, and you shall go to church with me if you like."

Norman shook his head. "Curly will want to see me," he said.

"Well, about that do just as you like. Come here to breakfast—*that* you can do. Mother will let you."

"Yes, she'll let me," said Norman, "and I can go to see Long-Ears afterwards. You won't tell?" he added, with a glance of some fear.

"Tell what?"

"About *him*," said Norman, nodding his head in the direction of the factory.

"Long-Ears?—Not I! not a word."

So he set off, with a glance of pleasure lighting up his little face and making his feet patter more quickly over the ground.

"Poor little creature!" Mrs. Meadows said again most heartily, and this time the tear was standing in her eye.

The next morning it rained,—steadily, constantly. But at the usual time Mrs. Meadows and Silky were getting their breakfast.

"How it does pour down!" said Mrs. Meadows.

"I'm so sorry, mother," said Silky; "he won't come."

She had hardly turned her back to see to something at the fire, when there he was behind her, standing in the middle of the floor; in no Sunday dress, but in his every-day rags, and those wet through and dripping. How glad and how sorry both mother and daughter looked. They brought him to the fire and wiped his feet, and wrung the water from his clothes as well as they could; but they did not know what to do; for the fire would not have dried him in all the day; and to sit down to breakfast dry, with him soaking wet at her side, Mrs. Meadows could not. What to put on him was the trouble; she had no children's clothes at all in the house. But she managed. She stripped off his rags, and tacked two or three towels about him; and then over them wound a large old shawl, in some mysterious way, fastening it over the shoulders in such a manner that it fell round him like a loose straight frock, leaving his arms quite free. Then when his jacket and trousers had been put to dry, they sat down to breakfast.

In his old shawl wrapper, dry and warm, little Norman enjoyed himself, and liked very much his cup of weak coffee, and bread and butter, and the nice egg which

Mrs. Meadows boiled for him. But he did not eat like a child whose appetite knew what to do with good things; he had soon finished; though after it his face looked brighter and more cheery than it had ever done before in that house.

Mrs. Meadows left Silky to take care of the breakfast things, and drawing her chair up on the hearth, she took a little boy on her lap and wound her arms about him.

"Little Norman," said she, kindly, "you won't see Long-Ears to-day."

"No," said Norman, with a sigh, in spite of breakfast and fire; "he will have to do without me."

"Isn't it good that there is one day in the week when the poor little tired pin-boy can rest?"

"Yes—it is good," said Norman, quietly, but as if he were too much accustomed to being tired to feel any rest from it.

"This is God's day. Do you know who God is, Norman?"

"He made me," said Norman,—"and everybody."

"Yes, and everything. He is the great King over all the earth; and He is good; and He has given us this day to rest and to learn to be good and please Him. Can you read the Bible, Norman?"

"No, I can't read," said Norman. "Mother can."

"You know the Bible is God's book, written to tell us how to be good, and whatever the Bible says we must mind, or God will be angry with us. Now the Bible says, '*Thou shalt not steal.*' Do you know what that means?"

Mrs. Meadows spoke very softly.

"Yes," said Norman, swinging one little foot backward and forward in the warm light of the fire; "I've heard it."

"What does it mean?"

"I know," said Norman.

"It is to take what does not belong to us. Now, since God has said that, is it quite right for you to take that money of your mother's to buy milk for Long-Ears?"

"It *isn't* her money?" said Norman, his face changing; "and Long-Ears mustn't starve!"

"It is her money, Norman; all the money you earn belongs to her or to your father, which is the same thing. You know it does."

"But Curly must have something to eat," said Norman, bursting into tears. "Oh, don't tell! oh, don't tell!"

"Hush, dear," said Mrs. Meadows' kind voice, and she laid her kind hand on his head; "I am not going to tell; but I want you to be a good boy and do what will please God, that you may be one of the lambs of the Good Shepherd's flock. Do you know what I am talking about?"

"Yes—no; I don't know about the lambs," said Norman.

"Do you know who Jesus Christ is?"

"No."

"Poor little thing!" said Silky, and the tears fell from her face, as she went from the fire to the table. Norman looked at her, and so did her mother, and then they looked at each other.

"Jesus Christ is your best friend, little Norman."

"Is He?" said Norman, looking surprised.

"Do you know what He has done for you, little pinboy?"

Norman looked, and no wonder; for Mrs. Meadows' eyes were running over, and he did not know what to make of the dropping tears; but he shook his head.

"It is all in God's book, dear. Little Norman Finch, like everybody else, has not loved God, nor minded His commandments as he ought to do; and God would have punished us all, if Jesus Christ hadn't come down from heaven on purpose to take our punishment on Himself, so that we might be saved."

"How would He have punished us?" said Norman.

"He would have sent us away from Him for ever, to be in a miserable place, with devils and bad people, where we should see nothing good nor happy, and we should not be good nor happy ourselves; it is a place so dread-

ful, it is called in the Bible *the lake that burns with fire;* and He would never let us come into His heaven, where God is, and Jesus Christ is, and the good angels, and all God's people are, who are all as good and happy as they can be."

"And should I have been punished so?" said Norman.

"Yes, the Bible says so; and every one will now, who won't believe and love Jesus Christ."

"And did He go there?"

"Where?"

"To that place—that bad place; did He go there?"

"What, the Lord Jesus?"

Norman nodded.

"Not there. He is God, and He is called the Son of God; He could not do that, but He did this: He came to this world, and was born into the world a little child; and when He grew up to be a man, He died a cruel death for you and me—for you and me, little Norman."

"And then will God not punish me now?" said Norman.

"No, not a bit, if you will love the Lord Jesus, and be His child."

"What did He do that for?" said Norman.

"Because He is so good that He loved us, and wanted to save us and bring us back to be His children, and to be good and happy."

"Does He love me?" said Norman.

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Meadows; "do you think He came to die for you and does not love you? If you will love and obey Him, He will love you for ever, and take care of you, better care than any one else can."

"There isn't any one else to take care of me," said Norman. "Mother can't, and father don't much. I wish I knew about that."

With a look of wonder and interest at her daughter, Mrs. Meadows reached her Bible without letting Norman down from her lap; and turning from place to place, read to him the story of Christ's death, and various parts of His life and teaching. He listened gravely and constantly, and intently, and seemed not to weary of it at all, till she was tired and obliged to stop. He made no

remark then, but sat a little while with a sober face, till the fatigue of days past came over him, and his eye-lids drooped, and slipping from Mrs. Meadows' lap, he laid himself down on the hearth to sleep. They put something under his head, and sat watching him, the eyes of both every now and then running over.

"How much do you think he understood mother?" said Silky.

"I don't know," said Mrs. Meadows, shaking her head.

"He listened, mother," said Silky.

"Yes. I won't say anything more to him to-day. He has had enough."

And when the little sleeper awoke they lent all their attention to give him a pleasant day. He had a good dinner and a nice supper. His clothes were thoroughly dried; and Mrs. Meadows said, when she put them on, that if she could only get an opportunity on a week-day, she would patch them up comfortably for him. Towards nightfall the rain stopped, and he went home dry and warm, and with a good piece of cheese, and a loaf of plain gingerbread under his arm. When he was all ready to set out, he paused at the door, and looking up at Mrs. Meadows, said—

"Does He say we mustn't do that?"

"Who, dear?"

"Does Jesus Christ say we mustn't do that?"

"Do what?"

"Steal," said Norman, softly.

"Yes, to be sure. The Bible says it, and the Bible is God's Word; and Jesus said it over again, when He was on the earth."

Norman stood a quarter of a minute, and then went out and closed the door.

The next morning they looked eagerly for him; but he did not come. He stopped in the evening as usual, but Silky was just then busy, and did not speak to him beyond a word. On Tuesday morning he did not come. At night he was there again with his jug.

"How do you do, Norman?" said Mrs. Meadows, when she filled it, "and how is Long-Ears?"

But Norman did not answer, and turned to go.

"Come here in the morning, Norman," Mrs. Meadows called after him.

Whether he heard her or not, he did not show himself on his way to the factory next morning. That was Wednesday.

"Norman hasn't been here these three days, mother," said Silky. "Can it be that he has made up his mind to do without his halfpennyworth of milk for the dog?"

"Poor little fellow!" said Mrs. Meadows; "I meant to have given it to him; skim milk would do, I dare say; but I forgot to tell him on Sunday, and I told him last night to stop, but he hasn't done so. We'll go up there, Silky, and see how he is, after dinner."

"To the factory, mother?"

"Yes."

"And I'll carry a little pail of milk, mother."

"Well, honey, do."

After dinner they went, and I went in Silky's pocket. The factory was not a great distance from Mrs. Meadows' house, which stood about half-way between that and the town. Mrs. Meadows asked for Mr. Swift, and presently he came. Mrs. Meadows was a general favourite, I had found that out; everybody spoke to her civilly; certainly she did the same to everybody.

"Is little Norman at work to-day, Mr. Swift?"

"Norman Finch?—yes, ma'am, he is at work," said the overseer;—"he has not done much work, this day or so."

"He's not quite well, Mr. Swift?"

"Well, no, I suppose he isn't. He has not hard work neither; but he's a poor little mortal of a boy."

"Is he a good boy, sir?"

"Average," said Mr. Swift,—"as good as the average What, are you going to adopt him?"

"No, sir," said Mrs. Meadows;—"I wanted to ask a few questions about him."

"I don't know any harm of him," said Mr. Swift. "He's about like the common. Not particularly strong in the head, nor anywhere else, for that matter; but he

is a good-feeling child. Yes—now I remember. It is as much as a year ago, that I was angry with him one day, and was going to give the careless little rascal a strapping for something,—I forget what; we must keep them in order, Mrs. Meadows, let them be what they will;—I was going to give it to him, for something, and a bold brave fellow in the same room, about six times as big, and six times as strong as Norman, offered to take it, and spare him. *I* didn't care; it answered my purpose of keeping order just as well that Bill Bollings should have it, as Norman Finch, if he had a mind:—and ever since that time Finch has been ready to lay down his body and soul for Bollings if it would do him any service. He's a good-hearted boy, I do believe."

Mrs. Meadows and Silky looked at each other.

"That's it, mother!" said Silky. "That is why he understood and took it so quickly."

"What a grand boy the other must be!" said Mrs. Meadows.

"Ah, well—*that* was noble enough," said Mr. Swift,—"but he's a kind of harum-scarum fellow—just as likely to get himself into a scrape to-morrow as to get somebody else out of one to-day."

"That was noble," repeated Mrs. Meadows.

"Norman has never forgotten it. As I said, he would lay down body and soul for him. There's a little pet dog he has too," Mr. Swift went on, "that I believe he would do as much for. A pretty creature! I would have bought it of him, and given a good price for it, but he seemed frightened at the proposal. I believe he keeps the creature here partly for fear he should lose him if he took him home."

"Is it against the rules, sir, to have a dog in the factory?"

"Entirely!—of course!" said Mr. Swift; "but Mr. Carroll has said it, and so a new rule is made for the occasion. Mr. Carroll was willing to let such a pretty creature be anywhere, I believe."

"I should be afraid he would get hurt."

"So I was, but the dog has sense enough; he gets into no danger, and keeps out of the way like a Christian."

"May we go in, sir, and see Norman for a moment?"

"Certainly," Mr. Swift said; and himself led the way.

Through long rooms and rows of workers went Mr. Swift, and Mrs. Meadows and Silky after him, to the one where they found little Norman. He was standing before some sort of a machine, folding papers and pressing them against rows of pins, that were held all in order and with their points ready, by two pieces of iron in the machine. Norman was not working briskly, and he looked already jaded, though it was early in the afternoon. Close at his feet, almost touching him, lay the little white dog—a very little, and a most beautiful creature. Soft white curling hair, and large silky ears that drooped to the floor, as he lay with his head upon his paws; and the two gentle brown eyes looked almost pitifully up at the strangers. He did not get up; nor did Norman look round till Mrs. Meadows spoke to him.

"Hey, my boy, how are you getting on?" Mr. Swift said first, with a somewhat rough but not unkind slap across the shoulders. Norman shrugged his shoulders, and said, "Pretty well, thank you, sir,"—when he heard Mrs. Meadows' soft "Norman, how do you do?"

His fingers fell from the row of pin points, and he turned towards her, looking a great deal surprised and a little pleased, but with a very sober face.

"Where have you been these two or three days?"

"I've been here," said Norman, gravely.

"How comes it you have not been for Long-Ears' milk these three days?"

"I—I couldn't," said Norman.

"Why?"

"I hadn't any money—I gave it to mother."

He spoke low and with some difficulty.

"What made you do that, Norman?"

He looked up at her.

"Because—you know—Jesus said so."

Mrs. Meadows had been stooping down to speak to him, but now she stood up straight and for a minute she said nothing.

"And what has Long-Ears done, dear, without his milk?"

Norman was silent and his mouth twitched. Mrs. Meadows looked at the little dog, which lay still in the same place, his gentle eyes having, she thought, a curious sort of wistfulness in their look.

"Won't he eat meat?"

Norman shook his head and said "No," under his breath.

"He's a dainty little rascal," said the overseer; "he was made to live on sweetmeats and sugarplums."—And Mr. Swift walked on.

"I've brought him some milk," whispered Silky; and softly stooping down she uncovered her little tin pail and tried to coax the dog to come to it. But Norman no sooner caught the words of her whisper and saw the pail, than his spirit gave way; he burst into a bitter fit of crying, and threw himself down on the floor and hid his face.

Mr. Swift came back to see what was the matter. Mrs. Meadows explained part to him, without telling of Norman's keeping the money.

"Oh well," said Mr. Swift,—"but he mustn't make such a disturbance about it!—it is against all order; and feeding the dog, too, Lois!—but it is a pretty creature. He's hungry, he is! It's well we don't have ladies come to the factory every day."

Silky's other name was Lois.

"I will never do so again, Mr. Swift," said she, gently.

"Oh, I don't say that," said he. "I don't dislike the sight of you, Miss Lois; but I must have you searched at the door. Keep this boy quiet, now, Mrs. Meadows; and don't stay too long; or take him with you."

The boy was quiet enough now. While Mr. Swift had been speaking he had raised himself from the floor, half up, and had stopped sobbing, and was looking at Long-Ears and gently touching his curly head; who on his part was lapping the milk with such eagerness as if he had wanted it for some time. Norman's tears still fell, but they fell quietly. By the time the little dog had

finished the milk they did not fall at all. Till then nobody said anything.

"Come for it every morning again, my child," said Mrs. Meadows, softly; "I'll give it to you. What a dear little fellow he is! I don't wonder you love him. He shall have milk enough."

Norman looked up gratefully and with a little bit of a smile.

"You don't look very strong, my boy," said Mrs. Meadows. "You don't feel quite well, do you?"

He shook his head, as if it was a matter beyond his understanding.

"Are you tired?"

His eyes gave token of understanding that. "Yes, I'm tired. People are not tired up there, are they?"

"Where, dear?"

"Up there—in heaven?"

"No, dear," said Mrs. Meadows.

"I shall go there, won't I?"

"If you love Jesus and serve Him, He will take good care of you and bring you there safely."

"He will," said Norman.

"But you are not going yet, I hope, dear," said Mrs. Meadows, kissing him. "Good-bye. Come to-morrow, and you shall have the milk."

"Will you read to me that again, some day?" he inquired wistfully.

Mrs. Meadows could hardly answer. She and Silky walked back without saying three words to each other; and I never saw Mrs. Meadows cry so much as she did that afternoon and evening.

Norman came after that every morning for the dog's milk; and many a Sunday he and Long-Ears passed part of the time with Mrs. Meadows; and many a reading he listened to there, as he had listened to the first one.

He didn't talk much. He was always near his little dog, and he seemed quietly to enjoy everything at those times.

As the summer changed into autumn, and autumn gave way to winter, Norman's little face seemed to grow

better looking, all the while it was growing more pale and his little body more slim. It grew to be a contented, very quiet, and patient face, and his eye acquired an unusual clearness and openness; though he never was a bad-looking child. "He won't live long," Mrs. Meadows said, after every Sunday.

The little white dog all this while grew more white, and curly, and bright-eyed every day; or they at least all thought so.

It was not till some time in January that at last Norman stopped coming for milk, and did not go by to the factory any more. The weather was severe. Mrs. Meadows was shut up in the house with a bad cold; and some days were gone before she or Silky could get any news of him. Then, one cold evening, his mother came for the milk, and to say that Norman was very ill and would like to see Lois and Mrs. Meadows. She was a miserable-looking woman, wretchedly dressed, and with a jaded spiritless air, that seemed as if everything she cared for in life was gone, or she too poor to care for it. I thought Norman must have a sad home where she was. And his father must be much worse in another way, or his mother would not have such a look.

Silky and Mrs. Meadows got ready directly. Silky put her purse in her pocket, as she generally did when she was going to see poor people, and wrapping themselves up warm with cloaks, and shawls, and hoods, she and her mother set out. It was past sunset on a winter's day; clear enough, but uncommonly cold.

"It will be dark by the time we come home, mother," said Silky.

"Yes, honey, but we can find the way," came from under Mrs. Meadows' hood; and after that neither of them spoke a word.

It was not a long way; they soon came to the town, and entered a poor straggling street in which no good and comfortable buildings showed themselves, or at least no good and comfortable homes. Some of the houses were decently well built, but several families lived in each of them, and comfort seemed to be unknown. At

least after Mrs. Meadows' nice kitchen, with the thick carpet, and blazing fire, and dark cupboard doors, these all looked so. The light grew dimmer, and the air grew cooler, as Mrs. Meadows and Silky went down the street; and Silky was trembling all over by the time they stopped at one of these brick dwelling-houses and went in.

The front door stood open; nobody minded that; it was nobody's business to shut it. They went in, through a dirty passage and up stairs that nobody ever thought of cleaning, to the third story. There Mrs. Meadows first knocked, and then gently opened the door. A man was there, sitting over the fire; a wretched tallow candle on the table hardly showed what he looked like. Mrs. Meadows spoke with her usual pleasantness.

"Good evening, Mr. Finch;—can I see little Norman?"

"Yes,—I suppose so," the man said in a gruff voice, and pointing to another door; "they're in yonder."

"How is he?"

"I don't know! Going, I expect." He spoke in a tone that might have been half heartless, half heartful. Mrs. Meadows stayed for no further questions. She left him there and went on to the inner room.

It was so dark that hardly anything could be seen. A woman rose up from some corner—it proved to be Mrs. Finch—and went for the light. Her husband's voice could be heard gruffly asking her what she wanted with it, and her muttered words of reply; and then she came back with it in her hand.

The room was ill lighted, even when the candle was in it; but there could be seen two beds; one raised on some sort of a bedstead, the other on the floor in a corner. No fire was in this room, and the bed was covered with all sorts of coverings; a torn quilt, an old great-coat, a small ragged worsted shawl, and Norman's own poor little jacket and trousers. But on these, close within reach of the boy's hand, lay curled the little dog; his glossy hair and soft outlines making a strange contrast with the rags and poverty and ugliness of the place.

Norman did not look much changed, except that his face was so very pale it seemed as if he had no more

blood to leave it. Mrs. Meadows and Silky came near, and neither of them at first seemed able to speak. Mrs. Finch stood holding the light. Then Mrs. Meadows stooped down by the bed's head.

"Little Norman," she said, and you could tell her heart was full of tears,—"do you know me?"

"I know you," he said, in a weak voice, and with a little smile.

"How do you do?"

"Very well," he said in the same manner.

"Are you very well?" said Mrs. Meadows.

"Yes," he said. "I'm going now."

"Where, dear?"

"You know—to that good place. Jesus will take me, won't He?"

"If you love and trust Him, dear."

"He will take me," said Norman.

"What makes you think you are going, dear?" said Mrs. Meadows.

"I can't stay," said Norman, shutting his eyes. He opened them again immediately. "I'm going," he said. "I'm so tired. I shan't be tired there, shall I?"

"No, dear," said Mrs. Meadows, whose power of speech was likely to fail her. She kept wiping her face with her pocket-handkerchief. Norman stroked and stroked his little dog's head.

"Poor Long-Ears," said he, faintly,—"poor Long-Ears!—I can't take care of you now. Poor Long-Ears! you are hungry. He hasn't had anything to eat since—since—mother?"

"He doesn't know how time goes," said Mrs. Finch, who had not before spoken. "The dog hasn't had a sup of anything since the day before yesterday. He must be hungry. I don't know what he lives on. My husband don't care whether anything lives or not."

Silky had not said a word, and she did not now, but she brought out that same little tin pail from under her cloak and set it down on the floor. Norman's eye brightened. But the dog could not be coaxed to quit the bed; he would set only his two fore feet on the floor,

and so drank the milk out of the pail. Norman watched him, almost with a smile. And when the dog, having left the milk, curled himself down again in his old place, and looked into his master's face, Norman quite smiled.

"Poor Long-Ears!" he said, patting him again with a feeble hand; "I'm going to leave you,—what will you do?"

"I'll take care of him, Norman," said Mrs. Meadows.

"Will you?" said Norman.

"As long as he lives, if you wish."

Norman signed for her to put her ear down to him, and said earnestly,

"I give him to you—you keep him. Will you?"

"Yes, indeed, I will," said Mrs. Meadows.

"Then you will have milk enough, dear little Long-Ears," said Norman. "But," he said eagerly to Mrs. Meadows, "you must take him home with you to-night —I'm afraid father will do something with him if you don't."

"But you will want him," said Mrs. Meadows.

"No, I won't. Father will do something with him."

"Indeed he will, sure enough," said Mrs. Finch.

"Then I'll take him, and keep him, dear, as if he were yourself," said Mrs. Meadows.

"I shan't want him," said Norman, shutting his eyes again;—"I'm going."

"And you are not sorry, dear?" said Mrs. Meadows.

"No!" he said.

"I wonder why he should," said Mrs. Finch, wiping her eyes.

"And you know Jesus will take you?"

"Because I love Him," said Norman, without opening his eyes.

"What makes you love Him so, dear?"

"Because He did that for me," said Norman, opening his eyes once more to look at her, and then shutting them again. And he never opened them any more. It seemed that having his mind easy about his pet, and having seen his friends, he wanted nothing more on this earth. He just slumbered away a few hours, and died

so, as quietly as he had slept. His little pale meek face looked as if, as he said, he was glad to go.

Nothing but a degree of force that no one cared to use, could have moved Long-Ears from the body of his master till it was laid in the grave. Then, with some difficulty, Mrs. Meadows gained possession of him, and brought him home.

"Is that all?" said Carl, when the story stopped.

"All."

"What more of Mrs. Meadows and Silky?"

"Nothing more. They lived there, and took care of Long-Ears, and were kind to everybody, and sold milk, just as they used to do."

"And what about Long-Ears?"

"Nothing about him. He lived there with Mrs. Meadows and Silky, and was as well off as a little dog could be."

"And is that all?"

"That is all."

"And how did you get here?"

"I've told you enough for this time."

"I'll hear the rest another time," said Carl, as he grasped the purse and ran off towards home; for it was nearly noon, and his mother had called to him that dinner was ready.

"Mother," said Carl, "I have heard the stories of my purse, and of my penny, and of my three apples; and they're splendid!"

"What a child!" said Mrs. Krinken. "Are the stories not finished yet?"

"No," said Carl; "and I don't know which to hear next. There is the boat, and the pine cone, and the shoes, and the book, and the old stocking—all of them; and I don't know which to hear first. Which would you mother?"

"What is all that?" said John Krinken.

"He says his things tell him stories," said Mrs. Krinken; "and he has told over one or two to me, and it is

as good as a book. I can't think where the child got hold of them."

"Why, they *told* them to me, mother," said Carl.

"Yes," said Mrs. Krinken; "something told it to thee, child."

"Who told them, Carl?" said his father.

"My penny, and my purse, and my three apples,—or only one of the apples," said Carl;—"that was Beachamwell."

"Beach 'em *what?*" said his father.

"Beachamwell—that is the biggest of my three apples," said Carl.

At which John and Mrs. Krinken looked at each other, and laughed till their eyes ran down with tears.

"Let us hear about Beachamwell," said John, when he could speak.

"I've told it," said Carl, a little put out.

"Yes, and it was as pretty a story as ever I heard, or wish to hear," said Mrs. Krinken, soothingly.

"Let us hear the story of the shoes, then," said John.

"I haven't heard it yet," said Carl.

"Oh, you can't tell it till you have heard it?" said his father.

"I have only heard three of them," said Carl, "and I don't know which to hear next."

"The old stocking would tell you a rare story if it knew how," said his father; "it could spin you a yarn as long as its own."

"I would rather hear the old pine cone, John," said his wife. "Ask the pine cone, Carl. I wish it could tell the story, and I could hear it."

"Which first?" said Carl, looking from one to the other.

But John and Mrs. Krinken were too busy thinking of the story-teller, to help him out with his question about the stories.

"Then I'm going to keep the stocking for the very last one," said Carl.

"Why?" said his mother.

"Because it is ugly. And I intend to make the shoes

tell me their story next. I might want to put them on, you know."

And Carl looked down at two sets of fresh-coloured toes which looked out at him through the cracks of his old half-boots.

Mr. and Mrs. Krinken got up laughing, to attend to their business; and Carl, indignantly seizing his shoes, ran off with them out of hearing to the sunny side of the house; where he plumped himself down on the ground with them in front of him, and commanded them to speak.

THE STORY OF THE TWO SHOES.

"I BELIEVE," said the right shoe, "that I am the first individual of my race whose history has ever been thought worth asking for. I hope to improve my opportunity. I consider it to be a duty, in all classes, for each member of the class"——

"You may skip that," said Carl. "I don't care about it."

"I am afraid," said the right shoe, "I am uninteresting. My excuse is that I never was fitted to be anything else. Not to press ourselves upon people's notice is the very lesson we are especially taught; we were never intended to occupy a high position in society, and it is reckoned an unbearable fault in us to make much noise in the world."

"I say," said Carl, "you may skip that."

"I beg pardon," said the shoe, "I was coming to the point. 'Step by step' is our family motto. However, I know young people like to get over the ground at a leap. I will do it at once.

My brother and I are twins, and as much alike as it is possible perhaps for twins to be. Mr. Peg, the cobbler, thought we were exactly alike; and our upper leathers did indeed run about on the same calf (as perchance they may another time), but our soles were once further apart than they are ever likely to be for the future; one having

roamed the green fields of Ohio on the back of a sturdy ox, while the other came from Vermont. However, we are mates now, and having been as they say "cut out for each other," I have no doubt we shall jog on together perfectly well.

We are rather an old pair of shoes. In fact, we have been on hand almost a year. I should judge from the remarks of our friend Mr. Peg, when he was beginning upon us, that he was quite unaccustomed to the trade of shoe-*making*—shoe-mending was what he had before lived by; or, perhaps, I should rather say, tried to live by; I am afraid it was hard work; and I suppose Mr. Peg acted upon the excellent saying, which is also a motto in our family, that "it is good to have two or three strings to one's bow." It was in a little light front room, looking upon the street, which was Mr. Peg's parlour, and shop, and workroom, that he cut out the leather and prepared the soles for this his first manufacture. I think he had only stuff enough for one pair, for I heard him sigh once or twice as he was fidgeting with his pattern over my brother's upper leather till it was made out. Mr. Peg was a little elderly man, with a crown of gray hair all round the back part of his head; and he sat at work in his shirt sleeves, and with a thick, short leather apron before him. There was a little fire-place in the room, with sometimes fire in it, and sometimes not; and the only furniture was Mr. Peg's small counter, the low, rush-bottomed chair in which he sat to work, and a better one for a customer; his tools, and his chips; by which I mean the scraps of leather which he scattered about.

Hardly had Mr. Peg got the soles and the upper leathers and the vamps to his mind, and sat down on his chair to begin work, when a little girl came in. She came from a door that opened upon a staircase leading to the upper rooms, and walked up to the cobbler. She was a little brown-haired girl, about nine or ten years old, in an old cotton frock; she was not becomingly dressed, and she did not look very well.

"Father," she said, "mother's head aches again."

The cobbler paused in his work, and looked up at her.

"And she wants you to come up and rub it—she says I can't do it hard enough."

Rather slowly Mr. Peg laid his upper leather and tools down.

"Will you close this shoe for me, Sue, while I am gone?"

He spoke half pleasantly, and to judge by his tone and manner, with some half-sorrowful meaning. So the little girl took it, for she answered a little sadly—

"I wish I could, father."

"I'm glad you can't, my dear."

He laid his work down and mounted the stairs. She went to the window, and stood with her elbows leaning on the sill, looking into the street.

Beachhead is only a small town; but still, being a sea-coast town, there is a great deal of bustle about it. The fishermen from the one side, and the farmers from the other, with their various merchandise; the active, strange-looking boys and women, for ever bustling up and down, make it quite a lively place. There is always a good deal to see in the street. Yet the little girl stood very still and quiet by the window; her head did not turn this way or that; she stood like a stupid person, who did not care what was going on. A woman passing up the street stopped a moment at the window.

"How is your mother to-day, Sue?"

"She's getting on slowly, Mrs. Binch."

"Does the doctor say she is in danger?"

"The doctor is not coming any more."

"Has he given her up?"

"Yes; he says there is nothing to do but to let her get well."

"Oh!—she is so brisk, is she?"

"No, ma'am—she's not brisk at all; she says"—

But Mrs. Binch had passed on and was out of hearing, and the little brown head stood still at the window again, leaning now on one hand. It was a smooth-brushed, round little head, seen against the open windows. By-and-by another stopped, a lady this time; a lady dressed in black, with a sweet, delicate face.

"How is your mother, Sue?"

"She's just the same, Mrs. Lucy."

"No better?"

"Not much, ma'am. It will take a long time, the doctor says."

"And are you, poor little tot, all alone in the house to do everything?"

"No, ma'am—there's father."

The sweet face gave her a sort of long, wistful look, and passed on. She stood there still at the open window, with her head leaning on her hand; and whatever was the reason, so dull of hearing, that her father had come down, seated himself in his chair, and taken up his shoe, several minutes before she found it out. Then she left the window and came to him.

"What shall I do, father?"

"She will want you directly," said the cobbler. "She's asleep now."

Sue stood still.

"Don't you want some dinner, Sue?"

She hesitated a little, and then said "Yes."

"Well see, dear, and make some more of that porridge. Can you?"

"Yes, father, there is some meal. And there is a little bread, too?"

"You may have that," said the cobbler. "And I'll go out by-and-by and see if I can get a little money. Mr. Shipham had a pair of boots new-soled a month ago, and Mr. Binch owes me for some jobs—if I only could get the money for them."

And the cobbler sighed.

"If people only knew, they would pay you, father, wouldn't they?"

"There is One that knows," said the cobbler. "And why they don't pay me He knows. Maybe it is to teach you and me, Sue, that 'man does not live by bread alone.'"

"'But by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live,'" his little daughter went on, softly, as if she were filling up the words for her own satisfaction.

"But we knew that before, father?"

"Perhaps we didn't know it enough," said the cobbler. "I'm afraid I don't now"——

And as her back was turned, he hastily brought his hand to his eyes.

"But, father, can one help feeling a little sorrowful, when—when things are so bad?"

"A little sorry?—perhaps one might feel *a little* sorry," said the cobbler; "but if I believe all that I know, I don't see how I could feel *very* unhappy. I don't see how I could; and I ought not."

His little daughter had been raking the fire together and setting on the coals a little iron saucepan of water. She turned and looked at him when he said this, as if she had not known before that he did feel "very unhappy." He did not see the look, which was a startled and sorrowful one; he was bending over his shoe-leather. She then left the room and went after the meal, which she brought in a yellow earthen dish, and began silently to mix for the porridge.

"The Bible says, father"—she began, stirring away.

"Yes, dear—what does it say?" said Mr. Peg.

"It says, 'Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and—verily'"——

Susan's voice broke. She stirred her porridge vehemently, and turned her back to her father.

"'Verily thou shalt be fed,'" said the cobbler. "Yes—I know it. The thing is to believe it."

"You do believe it, father," Susan said, softly.

"Ay, but I haven't trusted in the Lord, nor done any good to speak of. It will stand good for you, daughter, if it doesn't for me."

She had stirred her meal into the saucepan; and now setting down her dish she came to his side, and putting her two arms round his neck, she kissed him all over his face. The cobbler let fall leather and ends, and hugged her to his breast.

"That has done me more good than dinner, now," said he, when he had, albeit tearfully, given her two or

three sound kisses by way of finishing. "You may have all the porridge, Susie."

"There is enough, father, and there's some bread too."

"Eat it all up," said the cobbler, turning to his work again; perhaps to hide his eyes. She stood leaning on his shoulder, so as not to hinder the play of his arm.

"Shall I keep the bread for supper, father?"

"No, dear; I may get some money before that."

"Whose shoes are those, father?"

"They are not anybody's yet."

"Whose are they going to be?"

"I don't know. The first pair of feet that will fit them. If I sell them, I can get some leather and make more."

"Is that the last of your leather, father?"

"Ay—the last that is large enough; the rest is all pieces."

She stood a little while longer, laying her head on his shoulder; then there came a knocking upstairs, and she ran away. The cobbler worked at his shoe for a while, then turning his head, he dropped everything to go and see after the porridge; and he sat over the fire, stirring it, till he thought it was done, and then he drew back the saucepan. He went to the foot of the stairs and looked up and listened for a minute, and then left it and came back without calling anybody. It was plain that he must eat his dinner alone.

His dinner was nothing but porridge and salt, eaten with what would have been a good appetite if it had had good thoughts to back it. And the cobbler did not seem uncheerful; only once or twice he stopped and looked with a grave face into the fire on the hearth. But a porridge dinner after all could not last long; Mr. Peg put away his plate and spoon, placed the saucepan carefully in the corner of the fireplace, took off his leather apron, put on his coat, and taking his hat from the counter he went out.

There were no more stitches set in the shoe that afternoon, for Mr. Peg did not get home till dark. The first thing that happened after he went away, a gust of wind

blew round the house and came down the chimney, bringing with it a shower of soot which must have sprinkled the open saucepan rather thickly. Then the wind seemed to go up the chimney again, and could be heard whistling off among the neighbouring housetops. After a while little Susie came down and looked for her saucepan. She pulled it out, and fetched her plate and spoon and began to skim out the soot; but I suppose she found it rather indifferent, or else that she would lose a good deal of her porridge; for at one time she set her plate and spoon down upon the hearth beside her, and laid her face in her apron. She soon took it up again, but she did not make a large meal of the porridge.

She then went upstairs, and when she came down the second time it was nearly evening. She stood and looked about, to see that her father was not come in; then she made up the fire, and when it was burning she stood and looked into it just in the same way that she had stood and looked out of the window. Suddenly she wheeled about, and coming behind the counter took her father's Bible from a heap of bits of leather on which it lay, and went and sat down on the hearth with it; and as long as there was light she was bending over it. Then, when the light faded, she clasped her hands upon the closed Bible, and leaning back against the jamb fell fast asleep in an instant, with her head against the stone.

There she was when her father came home; her feet were stretched out upon the hearth and he stumbled over them. That waked her. By the glimmering light of the fire something could be seen hanging from Mr. Peg's hand.

"Have you got home, father?—I believe I have been to sleep instead of waiting for you. What have you got in your hand?—Fish!—O father!"

You should have heard the change of little Sue's voice when she said that. Generally her way of speaking was low and gentle like the twilight, but those two words were like a burst of sunshine.

"Yes, dear. Blow up the fire so that you may see them. I've been to Mrs. Binch's—I've been all over

town, almost—and Mrs. Binch's boy had just come in with some, and she gave me a fine string of them—nice blue fish—there."

Susan had made a blaze, and then she and the cobbler admired and turned and almost *smelt* the fish, for joy.

"And shall we have one for supper, father?"

"Yes, dear. You put on some coals, and I'll get the fish ready directly. Has mother had all she wanted to-day?"

"Yes, father. Mrs. Lucy sent her some soup and she had plenty. And I saved the bread from dinner, father, isn't it a good thing? and there is some more porridge, too."

What a fire Sue had made by the time her father came back with the fish, nicely cleaned and washed. She put it down, and then the two sat over it in the fire-light and watched it broil. It was done as nicely as a fish could be done; and Susan fetched the plates and the salt and the bread; and then the cobbler gave thanks to God for their supper. And then the two made such a meal! there was not a bone of that fish but was picked clean, nor a grain of salt, nor a scrap of bread left from that supper; and I was as glad as anything of my tough nature can be, to know that there were several more fish besides the one eaten. Sue cleared away the things when they had done; ran up to see if her mother was comfortable; and soon ran down again. Her step had changed too.

"Now, darling," said her father, "come and let us have our talk by this good fire-light."

Susan came to his arms and kissed him; and his arms were wrapped round her as she sat on his knee.

"It is one good thing, you have no lights to work by, so we can talk," said Sue, stroking his face. "If you had, we couldn't."

"Well," said the cobbler. "Let us talk to-night of the things we have to be thankful for."

"There are a great many of them, father," said Sue, with her twilight voice.

"The first thing is, that we know we have a Friend in heaven, and that we do love and trust Him."

"O father!" said Sue, "if you begin with that, all the other things will not seem anything at all."

"That is true," said Mr. Peg. "Well, Sue, let us have them all. You begin."

"I don't know what to begin with," said Sue, looking into the fire.

"I have you," said her father, softly kissing her.

"O father!—and I have you; but now you are taking the next best things."

"I should not care for all the rest without this one," said the cobbler;—"nor should I mind anything but for this," he added, in a somewhat changed tone.

"But, father, you must not talk of that to-night; we are only going to talk of the things we have to be thankful for."

"Well, we can take the others to-morrow night maybe, and see what we can make of them. Go on, Susie," said the cobbler, putting his head down to her cheek,—"I have my dear little child, and she has her father. That is something to thank God, and to be glad for,—every day."

"So I do, every day, father," said Susan, very softly.

"And so do I," said the cobbler; "and while I can take care of thee, my dearest, I will trouble myself about nothing else.

Now you are getting upon the other things, father," said Sue. "Father, it is something to be thankful for, that we can have such a nice fire every night,—and every day, if we want it."

"You don't know what a blessing that is, Sue," said her father. "If we lived where we couldn't get drift wood—if we lived as some of the poor people do in the great cities—without anything but a few handfuls of dry sticks to burn in the hardest weather, and what wretched stuff for making a fire—I am glad you don't know how different it is, Sue!" said he, putting his arms round her. "There is not a morning of my life but I thank God for giving us wood, when I set about lighting it."

"How do they do in those places without wood?" said Sue, sticking out her feet toward the warm ruddy blaze.

"He who knows all only knows," said the cobbler, gravely. "They do without. It seems to me I would rather go without eating, and have a fire."

"I don't know," said Sue, thoughtfully, "which I would rather do. But those poor people haven't food either, have they?"

"Not enough," said the cobbler. "They manage to pick up enough to keep them alive, somehow." And he sighed, for the subject came near home.

"Father," said Sue, "I do not believe God will let us starve."

"I do not think He will, my dear," said the cobbler.

"Then why do you sigh?"

"Because I deserve that He should, I believe," said the cobbler, hanging his head. "I deserve it, for not trusting Him better. 'Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you.' Ah, my dear, we can't get on without running to our upper storehouse, very often."

"Father, I believe God doesn't mean that we should."

"That's just it," said the cobbler. "That is, no doubt, what He means. Well, dear, let us learn the lesson He sets us."

"Then, father," said Sue, "don't you think we have a nice little house? It is large enough, and it's warm."

"Yes, dear," said the cobbler; "some of those poor people we were talking about would think themselves as well off as kings if they had such a house at this."

"And it is in a pleasant place, father, where there are a great many kind people."

"I hope there are," said the cobbler, who was thinking at the moment how Mr. Shipham had put him off, and Mr. Dill had avoided him, and Mr. Binch had objected to every one of his moderate charges.

"Why, father," said Sue, "Mrs. Lucy every day sends things to mother, and Mrs. Binch gave you the fish, and Mrs. Jackson came and washed ever so many times, and—and Mrs. Galatin sent the pudding and other things for mother, you know."

"Well, dear," said the cobbler, "yes,—it seems that womankind is more plenty here at any rate than mankind."

"Why, father?" said Sue.

"I hope you will never know, dear," he answered. "It was a foolish speech of mine."

"And I'm sure it is a blessing, father, that we have so many things sent us for my mother,—she has almost as much as she wants; and things we couldn't get. Now, Mrs. Lucy's soup—you don't know how nice it was. I tasted just the least drop in the spoon; and mother had enough of it for to-day and to-morrow. And then the doctor says she will get well by-and-by; and that will be a blessing."

It was a blessing so far off that both the cobbler and his little daughter looked grave as they thought about it.

"And, I'm well, father, and you are well," said Sue, pleasantly.

"Thank God!" said the cobbler.

"And father, don't you think it is a little blessing to live near the sea; and to have the beautiful beach to walk upon, and see the waves come tumbling in, and smell the fresh air? We used to go so often, and by-and-by we may again. Don't you think it is a great deal pleasanter than it would be if Beachhead was a long way off in the country, out of sight of the ocean?"

"Ah, Sue," said her father, "I don't know;—I have lived a great part of my life in one of those inland places, and I didn't want to hear the sea roar then, and I could get on without the smell of salt water. No,—you don't know what you are talking about exactly; every sort of place that the Lord has made, has its own pleasantness; and so has the sea; but I love the green pasture fields as well as I do the green field of water, to this day."

"But one might be in a place where there was not the sea nor the pasture-fields either, father."

"So one might," said the cobbler. "Yes, there are plenty of such places. The sea *is* a blessing. I was thinking of my old home in Connecticut; but the world is not all green hills and sea shore,—there is something else in it—something else. Yes, dear, I love those large waves too."

"And then, father," said Sue, laying her head on his breast, "we can come back to the best things,—that you were beginning with."

"Ay," said the cobbler, casting his arm round her. And for a little space they sat silent and looked into the fire, and then he went on.

"Poor as we sit here, and weak and dying as we know we are, we know that we have a tabernacle on high—a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It won't matter much, Sue, when we get there"——

What would not matter, the cobbler did not say; something came in his throat that stopped him.

"It won't matter, father," said Sue, softly.

They sat still a little while; the flame of the bits of wood in the chimney leaped up and down, burned strongly and then fell; and the red coals glowed and glimmered in place of it, but with less and less power.

"Now, Sue, let us read," said the cobbler on a sudden.

She got up, and he put on the coals two or three pieces of light wood, which soon blazed up. While he was doing this, Sue brought the Bible. Then she took her former place in her father's arms; and he opened the book and read by the firelight, pausing at almost every sentence. "'*Praise ye the Lord.*'—We will do that, Sue," said the cobbler, "for ever."

"'*Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.*'"

"You do that, father," said Sue, softly.

"I do fear Him;—I do delight in His commandments," said the poor cobbler. "I might do so a great deal more. But see how it goes on:—

"'*His seed shall be mighty upon earth; the generation of the upright shall be blessed.*' No doubt of it;—only let us see that we are upright, my child.

"'*Wealth and riches shall be in his house.*' So they are, Sue; are we not rich?"

"Yes, father. But don't you think that means the other kind of riches too?"

"I don't know," said the cobbler; "if it does, we shall have them. But I don't know, daughter; see—

"'*Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.*' It seems as if that riches had to do with that righteousness. You know what Jesus says,—'*I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich.*' I think it is the kind of riches of that man who is described 'as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.'"

"Well, so we do, father, don't we?"

"Let us praise Him," said the cobbler.

"'*Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.* What a promise!"

"Unto the *upright*, again," said Sue.

"Mind it, dear Sue," said her father, "for we may see darker times than we have seen yet."

Sue looked up at him gravely, but did not speak.

"'*Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteousness.*'"

"That is the upright man," said Sue.

"'*A good man showeth favour and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion. Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*' You remember who says,—'I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me'"

"That is Zion, father, isn't it?" said Sue.

"And just before that,—'*Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.*'"

"We oughtn't to be afraid, father," said Sue, softly.

"I am not afraid," said the cobbler.

"'*The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.*' There it is, Sue.

"'*His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies. He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour. The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth and melt away, the desire of the wicked shall perish.*'"

The cobbler closed the book; and he and his little

daughter knelt down, and he prayed for a few minutes; then they covered up the fire, and they went upstairs together. And the night was as quiet in that house as in any house in the land.

The next morning the cobbler and his daughter broiled another fish; but the breakfast was a shorter and less talkative affair than the supper had been. After breakfast the cobbler sat down to his work, but before the shoe was half an hour nearer to being done, Sue appeared at the bottom of the stairs saying, "Father, mother says she wants a piece of one of those fish."

The cobbler's needle stood still. "I don't believe it is good for her," said he.

"She says she wants it."

"Well, can't you put it down, my daughter?"

"Yes, father; but she says she wants me to do her room up; and she's in a great hurry for the fish."

Mr. Peg slowly laid his work down. Sue ran upstairs again, and the cobbler spent another half-hour over the coals and a quarter of a fish. Sue came for it, and the cobbler went to his work again.

It was a cold day; the wind whistled about and brought the cold in; and every now and then Sue came down and stood at the fire a minute to warm herself. Every time she came, the cobbler stayed his hand and looked up, and looked wistfully at her.

"Never mind, father," said Sue. "I'm only a little cold."

"You are blue," said he.

And at last Mr. Peg couldn't stand it. Down went the leather on one side of him and the tools on the other; and he went and lugged an armful or two of sticks upstairs and made a fire there, in spite of Sue's begging him to keep on with his work and not mind her.

"But we shan't have wood enough, father," she said at last, gently.

"I'll go at night to the beach, and fetch a double quantity," said the cobbler, "till your mother is able to come downstairs. *That* I can do. I can't bear to see you cold, if you can."

And Sue stayed upstairs, and the cobbler worked after that, pretty steadily, for some hours. But in the middle of the afternoon came a new interruption. Two men came into the shop and gave an order or two to the cobbler, who served them with unusual gravity.

"When is court day, Sheriff?" he asked in the course of business.

"To-morrow, Mr. Peg."

"To-morrow?" said the cobbler.

"What is the matter? has it come on the wrong day? It always does."

"I had forgotten all about it," said the cobbler. "Can't I be let off, sir?"

"From what?" said the other man.

"Why, it is rather an ugly job, some think," returned the Sheriff. "He has got to be one of the jury that is to try Simon Ruffin."

"I must beg to be let off," said the cobbler. "I am not at all able to leave home."

"You must tell the court, then," said he who was called the Sheriff; "but it would not do any good, I believe. Everybody says much the same thing, nobody likes the job; but you see, this is a very difficult and important case; a great many have been thrown out; it is hard to get just the right men, those that are altogether unobjectionable; and everyone knows you, Mr. Peg."

"But my family want me," said the cobbler: "they can't do without me. Can't you let me go, Mr. Packum?"

"Not I," said the Sheriff; "that is no part of my duty; you must ask the court, Mr. Peg."

"To-morrow?" said the cobbler.

"Yes, to-morrow; but I tell you beforehand it won't do any good. What excuse can you make?"

"My family want my care," said the poor cobbler.

"So does every man's family," said the Sheriff, with a laugh; "he is a happy man that does not find it so. You have not much of a family, Mr. Peg, have you?—if you had my seven daughters to look after now. Well, Mr. Jibbs,—shall we go?"

They went; and sitting down again in his chair the

poor cobbler neglected his work and bent over it with his head in his hand. At length he got up, put his work away, and left the room. For a while his saw might be heard going at the back of the house; then it ceased, and nothing at all was to be heard for a long time; only a light footstep overhead now and then. The afternoon passed, and the evening came.

The cobbler was the first to make his appearance. He came in, lighted the fire, which had quite died out, and sat down as he had sat before, with his head in his hand. So his little daughter found him. She stepped lightly, and he did not hear her till her hand was on his shoulder. Then she asked him, "What was the matter?"

"Oh, nothing that should make me sit so," said the cobbler, rousing himself.

"We have got more fish left yet," said Sue.

"Yes, dear,—it isn't that; but I have to go away to-morrow."

"Away?" said Sue.

"Yes, away to court."

"What for, father?"

"Why they have put me down for a juryman, and I'm afraid there will be no getting off. The Sheriff says there won't."

"What have you to do, father?"

"Sit on the jury, dear, to decide whether Simon Ruffin is guilty or no?"

"Simon Ruffin?—that shot that man! O father!"

"It is very sad," said the cobbler.

"How long will you be gone?"

"I can't tell at all," said the cobbler. "A day!—No. They can't take the evidence in two days; I don't know whether it will be two or three days, or a week, dear."

"A week! And what shall we do?" Sue could not help saying.

"If I can get off, I will," said the cobbler; "but in case I can't, I have, or at least I will have by the morning, as much wood as will do till I come back. I have two and sixpence besides, which I can leave you, darling; and I can do nothing more but trust."

"Father, isn't it hard to trust, sometimes?" Sue said, with her eyes full of tears. The poor cobbler wrapped her in his arms and kissed them away, but he did not try to answer.

"It may not do us any harm, after all," said Sue, more brightly; "or you may be able to come back, father. Father, you know we are to talk over to-night the things that we have that we cannot be thankful for."

"'In everything give thanks,'" said the cobbler.

"Yes, father, but it doesn't say *for* everything?"

"Perhaps not," said the cobbler. "Well, darling, we shall see. Let us have our supper first."

"We'll have the largest fish to-night, father."

The fish was not just out of the water as the one they had eaten the night before, but it was eaten with a good will. Sue sighed once or twice as she was putting the dishes away, and did not step quite so lightly. Then she came to her former place in her father's arms; and her head rested upon his shoulder, and her cheek was laid to her forehead, and so they sat some minutes without speaking.

"Come, father," said Sue, "will you talk?"

"Yes, dear. Let us tell over what we have to bear, and see how we can bear it."

"We must go to our 'upper storehouse' again for that, father."

"Ay, dear; always."

"The first thing, I suppose," said Sue, "is that we have not quite money enough."

"We have just what God gives us," said the cobbler. "I will never complain of that."

"Why, you never complain of anything, father. But it isn't pleasant."

"No, dear," said the cobbler; "and yet if we had money enough, could we trust God as we do? It is a sweet thing to live by His hand only; to feel that it is feeding us to-day, and to know that it will to-morrow, for 'was He ever a wilderness to Israel?' No, dear; I don't mean to say that poverty is not hard to bear some-

times; nor that I wouldn't give you plenty of everything if I had it to give; but I do say that there is a sweet side even to this."

"Father, our fish would not have tasted so good if we had always had plenty of them."

"I suppose not," said the cobbler, with a little bit of a stifled sigh, "and maybe we shouldn't know how to love each other quite so well, Sue."

"Oh, yes, we should!" said Sue.

"I don't know," said the cobbler. "I should not know what my little daughter can do and bear, if she had not had a chance to show me."

"Why, I have not much to bear, father," said Sue.

"Mother wouldn't know what a good nurse you can be."

"I wish she hadn't a chance to know that, father."

"Yes," said the cobbler, "your mother's sickness; that seems the hardest evil we have had to do with. It is not easy to find any present comfort in that, nor any present good; for I am afraid it makes me more impatient than patient. Perhaps that is why this is sent to me. But if we can't see the reason of a great many things now, we shall by-and-by. We shall know, Sue, what the reason was. '*Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no.*'"

Sue lifted up her head, and her little face was beautiful for the strong patience, and bright trust and love, that was in it. Her eyes were swimming; and her lips were speaking, though they only moved to tremble.

"We can't wait, Sue," said the cobbler, gently. Sue laid down her head again.

"So it seems we have got the reason of it already," Mr. Peg went on—"if not the good."

"We may have got some of the good too, without knowing it," said his little daughter.

"Still we shall be very glad to have mother well again."

"Oh, won't we!" said Sue.

"And it will teach us how to be thankful for the common things we forget."

There was a little pause.

"Then you would like me to go to school," said Sue; "and I can't."

"And if you could, I should not have the pleasure of teaching you myself," said the cobbler. "I can bear that."

"But then I can't learn so many things," said Sue.

"Of one kind you can't, and of another kind you can," said her father. "I don't believe there is a school-girl in Beachhead than can broil a fish as you can."

"O father! but then you showed me how."

"Do you think broiling fish comes by nature?" said the cobbler. "I can tell you there are many people that can't learn it at all. And that is only one of your accomplishments."

"O father!" said Sue again, smiling a little.

"You can nurse a sick mother, and mend a hole in your father's coat, and clean a room, and make a bed, with anybody."

'Still, father, you would like me to go to school?"

'Yes, I would," said the cobbler. "Maybe I shall not be sorry, by-and-by, that I couldn't."

"And then, father," said Sue, "you can't get work enough."

"Yes!" said the cobbler. "If I could do that, it would be all smooth. But God would give it to me if it pleased Him, and if it does not please Him, there must be some reason; can't we trust Him and wait?"

Sue looked up again, not so brightly as before; meekly and rather tearfully.

"And then I must leave you to-morrow," said her father, kissing her brow—"that seems just now the worst of all."

"Perhaps you will come back again, father," said Sue.

"I am afraid I shall not—till this trial is over."

"It is a disagreeable business, isn't it, father?"

"Very disagreeable—as frightful as can be, to look at." They were silent a while.

"There may some good come of it, after all," said Sue, in her twilight voice.

"Good will be the end of it," said the cobbler. "There

is a kind hand doing it, and an almighty arm upholding us in it; 'we shall not be utterly cast down;' so we must bear to be poor, and to be sick, and to be separated; and just leave it all with God."

"Father, it is pleasant to do that," said Sue; but you could tell by the tone of her words that she was crying a little.

"Why, darling, if we *are* poor, and sick, and in trouble, we have our dear Saviour, and we know that the Lord is our God. We are not poor people—not we. 'Having nothing, and yet possessing all things.' Who would we change with, Sue?"

Sue had to wait a little while before she spoke, but then she said—"I wouldn't change with anybody."

"No more would I," said the cobbler, giving her another kiss.

And so they went to bed, a couple of very rich poor people.

But the house looked poor the next day—empty and cold. The cobbler was off betimes; the little breakfast fire died out; dust lay on the counter; the tools and the unfinished work were here and there; the wind slipped in and slipped out again; and nothing else paid us a visit, except Sue, who once or twice looked in and looked round as if to see whether her father were there. Once she came into the room and stood a few minutes, with her little brown head and quiet grave face, looking at the ashes in the fireplace, and the neglected work, and her father's chair, with a wistful sort of eye. It said, or seemed to say, that however she might have felt last night, she would be very glad to-day if they were not poor, nor sick, nor separated. She looked pale and weary too; but she did not stay long to rest or think. Her feet could be heard now and then upstairs. The cobbler did not come home; the night darkened upon just such an afternoon as the morning had been.

The next day began in the same manner. Towards noon, however, the outer door opened, and in came a puff of fresh cold air, and another visitor, who looked fresh, but not cold at all. It was a boy about thirteen or

fourteen; healthy, ruddy, bright-eyed, well-dressed, and exceedingly neat in his dress. He came in like one familiar with the place, and took note of all the unusual tokens about as if he knew well what was usual and what was unusual. He looked at the cold chimney and scattered work; he went to the foot of the stairs and stood listening a moment; and then coming away from there, he loitered about the room, now going to the window and now to the chimney, evidently waiting. He had to wait a good while; but he waited. At last he got what he wanted, for, tired with being upstairs, or wanting to gather some news from the outer world, Sue slowly came down the stairs, and showed her little face at the staircase door. And almost before it had time to change, the new comer had called out—"Sue!"

And with an unknown light breaking all over her face, Sue exclaimed joyously, "Roland!" and springing across to him, put her sweet lips to his with right good will.

"Oh, you have got back," said Sue, with a gladsomeness it did, or would have done, any one's heart good to hear.

"Here I am. Haven't I been a long while away?"

"Oh, so long!" said Sue.

"But what is the matter here, Sue; what's become of you all?"

"Why, mother is sick, you know—she hasn't got well yet; and father is away."

"Where is he?"

"He had to go to the court—he had to be a juryman to try Simon Ruffin."

"When?"

"Yesterday morning. And we hoped he would be able to get leave to come away—we wanted him so much; but he hasn't been able to come."

"Has he been away since yesterday morning? Who is taking care of you?"

"Why, nobody," said Sue.

"So there is nobody in the house with you?"

"Nobody but mother. Father left wood enough all ready."

"Wood enough for how long?"

"Oh, for a good many days."

"Are you not afraid?"

"Why, no, Roland!"

"Who goes to market for you, Sue?"

"Nobody."

"What do you live on?"

"Oh, people send mother nice things: Mrs. Lucy sent her a whole pailful of soup the other day."

"How big a pail?"

"Why, Roland!—I mean a nice little tin pail: so big."

"And do you live on soup too?"

"No," said Sue.

"On what then?"

"Oh, on what there is."

"Exactly. And what is there?"

"Mrs. Binch gave father a string of fish the other night; and since then I have made porridge."

"What sort of porridge?"

"Corn-meal porridge."

"Why, Sue!—do you live on that?"

"Why, porridge is very good," said Sue, looking at him. But there was a change in his eye, and there came a glistening in hers; and then she threw suddenly her two arms round his neck and burst into a great fit of crying.

If Roland had been a man, his arm would not have been put round her with an air of more manly and grave support and protection; and there were even one or two furtive kisses, as if between boyish pride and affection; but affection carried it.

"I don't know what made me cry," said Sue, rousing herself after she had had her cry out.

"Don't you?" said Roland.

"No. It couldn't have been these things; because father and I were talking about them the other night, and we agreed that we did not feel poor at all; at least, of course, we felt poor, but we felt rich too."

"How long have you been living on porridge?"

"I don't know. Have you had a pleasant time, Roland?"

"Yes, very. I'll tell you all about it some day, but not now."

"Is Merrytown as pleasant as Beachhead?"

"It is more pleasant."

"More pleasant!" said Sue. "Without the beach, and the waves, Roland?"

"Yes it is; and you would say so too. You would like it better than anybody. There are other things there instead of beach and waves. You shall go there some day, Sue, and see it."

"I can't go," said Sue, meekly.

"Not now, but some day. Sue, have you not any money?"

"I have two and sixpence, that father gave me; but I was afraid to spend any of it for fear he or mother might want it for something. I must though, for I have got but a very little Indian meal."

"Sue, have you had any dinner to-day?"

"Not yet. I was just coming down to see about it."

"Your mother does not eat porridge, does she?"

"Oh, no. She has had her dinner."

"Well, will you let me come and have dinner with you?"

She brought her hands together, with again a flush of great joy upon her face; and then put them in both his.

"How pleasant it is that you have come back!" she said.

"It will take a little while to get the porridge ready, won't it?" said he, beating her hands gently together and looking as bright as a button.

"Oh, yes—it will take a little while," said Sue. "I haven't got the water boiling yet."

"Have you got meal enough for both of us?"

"Yes, I believe so;—plenty."

Just then Mrs. Lucy opened the front door and brought her sweet face into the room. She looked a little hard at the two children, and asked Sue how her mother was. Roland bowed, and Sue answered.

"May I go up and see her?"

Sue gave permission. Mrs. Lucy went up the stairs. Roland stopped Sue as she was following.

"Sue, I'll go to market for you to-day. Give me twopence of your money, and I'll get the meal you want."

"Oh, thank you, Roland!" said Sue;—"that will be such a help to me;"—and she ran for the pennies and gave them into his hand.

"I'll be back presently," said he; "and then I'll tell you about my journey. Run up now after Mrs. Lucy."

"I don't think I need go," said Sue; "they don't want anything with me."

"Run up, though," said Roland; "maybe Mrs. Lucy will ask your mother too many questions."

"Why, that won't hurt her," said Sue, laughing; but Roland seemed in earnest, and she went up.

Immediately Roland set to work to light a fire. He knew where to go for wood, and he knew how to manage it; he soon had the hearth in order and a fine fire made ready; and it was done without a soil on his nice clothes and white linen. He was gone before Mrs. Lucy and Sue came down; but the snapping and the sparkling in the chimney told tales of him.

"Why he has lit the fire for me!" cried Sue, with a very pleased face.

"Who has?" said the lady.

"Roland."

"That boy who was here when I came?"

"Yes, ma'am; he has made it for me."

"Who is he?"

"He is Roland Halifax," said Sue.

"What, the son of the widow, Mrs. Halifax?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And how came you to know him so well?"

"Why, I have always known him," said Sue; "that is, almost always. I used to know him a great many years ago, when I went to school; and he always used to take care of me, and give me rides on his sleigh, and go on the beach with me; and he always comes here."

"Is he a good boy?"

"Yes, ma'am; he is the best boy in the whole place," Sue answered, with kindling eyes.

"I hope he is," said Mrs. Lucy, "for he has nobody to manage him but his mother. I fancy he has very much his own way."

"It is a good way," said Sue, decidedly. "He is good, Mrs. Lucy."

"Does your mother want anything in particular, Sue?"

Sue hesitated, and looked a little troubled.

"Tell me, dear; now while your father is away you have no one to manage for you. Let me know what I can do."

"Oh, Roland would manage for us," said Sue,—"but"——

"But what?"

The lady's manner and tone were very kind. Sue looked up.

"She has nothing to eat, ma'am."

"Nothing to eat!"

"No, ma'am; and I have only two shillings and sixpence—two shillings and fourpence, I mean,—to get anything with; and I don't know what to get. She can't eat what we can."

"And what have you in the house besides?—tell me, dear. We are all only stewards of what God gives us; and what you want perhaps I can supply."

Sue hesitated again.

"We haven't anything, Mrs. Lucy, but a little Indian meal. Roland is going to buy me some more."

"Are your father's affairs in so bad a condition, my child?"

"He can't get work, ma'am; if he could there would be no trouble. And what he does get he can't always get paid for."

"And how long has this been the case, dear?"

"A long time," said Sue, her tears starting again; "ever since a good while before mother fell sick—a good while before; and then that made it worse."

Mrs. Lucy looked at Sue a minute, and then stooped forward and kissed the little meek forehead that was raised to her; and without another word quitted the house.

Sue, with a very much brightened face, set about getting her porridge ready; evidently enjoying the fire that had been made for her. She set on her saucepan, and stirred in her meal; and when it was bubbling up properly, Sue turned her back to the fire, and stood looking and meditating about something. Presently away she went, as if she had made up her mind. There was soon a great scraping and shuffling in the back room, and then in came Sue, pulling after her, with much ado, a large empty chest, large enough to give her some trouble. With an air of business she dragged it into the middle of the room, where it was established solid and square, after the fashion of a table. Sue next dusted it carefully, and after it the counter and chairs and mantel-shelf; the floor was clean swept always; and Sue herself, though in a faded cotton frock, was as nice in her ways as her friend Roland. Never was her little brown head anything but smoothly brushed; her frock clean; her hands and face as fair and pure as nature had meant them to be. Roland looked as if dust could not stick to him.

When the room wa in a due state of order, Sue brought out and placed the two plates, the salt cellar, with a little wooden spoon in it, the tumblers of blown glass, a pitcher of water, and the spoons. She had then done all she could; and she turned to watch her porridge and the front door both at once; for she did not forget to keep the porridge from burning, while her eye was upon the great brown door every other minute.

The porridge had been ready some time before the door at last opened, and in came Roland, bearing a large market basket on his arm.

"It is astonishing," said he, as he set it down, "what a heavy thing Indian meal is!"

"Why, Roland," said Sue, "did you get all that with twopence?"

"No," said Roland; "the basket I borrowed It is my mother's."

"But have you got it full?" said Sue.

"Nearly full," said Roland complacently.

"I never thought that twopence would buy so much!" said Sue.

"Didn't you?" said Roland. "Ah, you are not much of a market woman yet, Sue. My arm is tired."

"I'm sorry," said Sue. "But I'm so glad you have got it for me."

"So am I. Now is that porridge ready?"

"Ready this long while," said the little housekeeper, carefully pouring it out. "It has been only waiting for you."

Roland looked at her with a curious, gentle, sorrowful expression, which was as becoming as it was rare in a boy of his years.

"Are you hungry, Sue?"

"Yes," said Sue, looking up from her dish with a face that showed her to be perfectly satisfied with the dinner and the company. "Are not you?"

"Why, I ought to be. The air is sharp enough to give one an appetite, Sue!"

"What!"

"Do you eat your porridge alone?"

"Not to-day," said Sue, smiling, while an arch look came across her gentle eye.

"Does that mean that you are going to eat me with it? I shall beg leave to interpose a stay of proceedings upon that."

And sitting down, with an air of determination, he drew the porridge-dish quite to his end of the chest-table, and looked at Sue as much as to say, "You don't touch it."

"What does that mean? Are you not going to let me have any?" said Sue, laughing.

"No."

"Why not?"

"I shall want all the porridge myself. You will have to take something else, Sue."

"But I haven't got anything else," said Sue, looking puzzled and amused.

"Well, if you give me my dinner, it is fair I should give you yours," said Roland; and rising, he brought his market-basket to the side of the table, and sat down again.

"It is a pity I can't serve things in their right order," he said, as he pulled out a quantity of apples from one end of the basket; "but you see the dinner has gone in here head foremost. I never saw anything so troublesome to pack. There is a loaf of bread now, that has no business to show itself so forward in the world; but here it comes. Sue, you will want a knife and fork."

And he placed a deep, long dish, with a cover, on the table, and then a flat round dish with a cover. Sue looked stupefied. Roland glanced at her.

"Your appetite has not gone, Sue, has it?"

But Sue got up and came round to him, and put her face in her two hands down on his shoulder, and cried very hard indeed.

"Why, Sue!" said Roland, gently, "I never expected to see you cry for your dinner."

But Sue's tears didn't stop.

"I will put all the things back into the basket, if you say so," said Roland, smiling.

"I don't say any such thing," said Sue, lifting up her tearful face and kissing his cheek, and then she went round to her seat and sat down with her head in her hands. Roland in his turn got up and went to her, and took hold of her hands.

"Come, Sue, what is the matter? that isn't fair. Look here, my porridge is growing cold."

And Sue laughed and cried together.

"Dear Roland! what made you do so?"

"Do what?"

"Why, do *so*. You shouldn't. It was too good of you."

Roland gave a merry little bit of a laugh, and began to take off the covers, and put them on the counter.

"Come, Sue, look up; I want my porridge, and I am waiting for you. Where shall I get a knife and fork? in the pantry in the back room?"

Sue jumped up, wiping away her tears, and ran for the knife and fork; and from that time throughout the rest of the meal, her face was a constant region of smiles.

"A roast chicken!—O Roland! how mother will like a piece of that! How nice it smells!"

"She has had her dinner," said Roland, who was carving; "you must take a piece of it first. I ought in conscience to have had a separate dish for the potatoes; but my market-basket was resolved not to take it. Some salt, Sue?"

Sue ran for another knife and fork, and then began upon her piece of chicken; and Roland helped himself out of his dish and ate, glancing over now and then at her.

"You cannot think how good it is, Roland, after eating porridge so long," said Sue, with a perfect new colour of pleasure in her face.

"This is capital porridge!" said Roland. "I will trouble you for a piece of bread, Sue."

"Why, Roland, are you eating nothing but porridge?"

"Yes, and I tell you I should like a piece of bread with it."

"Ah, do take something else!" said Sue, giving him the bread. "The porridge will keep till another time."

"I don't mean it shall, much of it," said Roland. "It is the best dinner I have had for a great while."

Sue laid down her knife and fork to laugh at him, though the doing so had very nearly made her cry again.

"Please take some chicken, Roland."

"I would rather not. I'll take a piece of pie with you presently."

"I should think chicken was enough," said Sue; "you need not have brought me pie."

"I wanted some. It is a mince pie, Sue. Do you remember that the day after to-morrow is Christmas?"

"Christmas the day after to-morrow?" said Sue. "No, I had forgotten all about Christmas."

"What shall we do to keep it?"

"Why, nothing, I shan't," said Sue, meekly. "I shall not eat porridge, Roland. Oh, if father could only come home: that would be enough keeping of Christmas. We should not want anything else."

"I'll tell you how it is going to be kept out of doors," said Roland. "It is setting in for a fine fall of snow. The air is beginning to soften and grow hazy already. I like a snowy Christmas."

"With snow on the ground; but not snowing?" said Sue.

"Yes, both ways. Now, Sue, have you another plate; or will you take it in your fingers?"

Sue ran off for plates.

"How I wish I could give some of this to father!" she said, as she tasted her first bit of the pie. "How will he get anything to eat, Roland?"

"They will take care of that," said Roland. "He will have a good dinner, Sue; you need not be concerned about it. If they did not feed their jurymen, you know, they might have no jury by the time the cause was got through; and that would be inconvenient. Has he not been at home at all?"

"No."

"They do sometimes let them come home," said Roland; "but in this case I suppose they are keeping everybody tight to the mark."

"Why should they not let them come home at night?" said Sue; "what would be the harm? They must sleep somewhere."

"They are afraid, Sue, that if they let them out of sight, somebody may talk to them about the cause, and put wrong notions into their heads; so that they won't give a true verdict."

"What is a verdict?" said Sue.

"It's the jury's decision. You see, Sue, all the people —all the lawyers, on both sides, will bring all the proof

they can to show whether Simon Ruffin did or did not shoot Mr. Bonnycastle. One side will try to prove that he did, and the other side will try to prove that he did not. The jury will hear all that is to be said, and then they will make up their minds which is the truth. When they are read, the judge will ask them, 'Gentlemen, are you agreed upon the verdict?' and the foreman will say 'Yes.' Then, the judge will ask, 'Is the prisoner at the bar guilty or not guilty?' and the foreman will say according as they have decided, 'Guilty,' or 'Not Guilty;' and that answer is the verdict."

"And then he will be hanged," said Sue.

"If they find he is guilty, he will; but they don't condemn him; that is the judge's business. The jury only decide what is the truth."

"Why must they have so many men to do that? Why would not one do as well?"

"It would, if they could be always sure of having a man who could not and would not make a mistake. It is not likely that twelve men will all make the same mistake."

"And must they all be agreed?" said Sue.

"They must all be agreed."

"And if they are not, the man can't be hanged."

"No, nor set free."

"I'm glad of that," said Sue.

"Why, Sue?"

"Because, if father isn't sure that he shot Mr. Bonnycastle, he won't let them hang him."

"It is well you can't be a juryman, Sue; you would never let any rogue have his rights."

"Yes, I would," said Sue, gravely; "if I thought he deserved them."

"I would not trust you," said Roland. "I should like to have you on the jury if I were standing a trial for my life. You would be challenged, though."

"Challenged!" said Sue.

"Yes."

"What is that?"

"Why, Simon Ruffin, for instance, might say, 'Mr.

Peg is an old enemy of mine; he has a grudge against me; he would not be a fair judge in my case.' That would be challenging your father as an improper juryman; and he would be put out of the jury."

"But father is not anybody's enemy," said Sue.

"No, I know he isn't," said Roland, smiling; "but that is an instance. Will you have some more pie, Sue?"

"No, thank you. I'll put these things away, and see if mother wants anything; and then if she doesn't I'll come down and we can talk."

While Sue cleared away the dishes, Roland mended the fire.

"You may as well let the table stand, Sue," said he, "we shall want it again."

"Why, are you coming to dinner with me again?" said Sue.

"I dare say I shall; if your father does not come home," said Roland.

Sue soon came down, for her mother luckily did not want her; and the two drew their chairs together and had a very long conversation, in the course of which Roland gave many details of his stay at Merrytown, and enlightened Sue as to the charms and beauties of a country village. Sue looked and listened, and questioned and laughed, till there was a knocking upstairs, and then they separated. Sue went up to her mother again, and Roland left the house.

The room did not look desolate any more, though it was left without anybody in it. There were the chest-table, and the contented-looking fire, and the two chairs. All this time we shoes lay in the corner and nobody looked at us. It seemed as if we were never to get done.

The fire had died out, the afternoon had not quite passed when Mrs. Lucy came again. Her knock brought Sue down. She had come to bring another little pail of soup, and a basket with some bread and tea and sugar.

"Don't spend your money, my child," she said; "keep it till you want it more. This will last your mother to-

morrow, and I will see that you have something stronger than porridge."

"Oh, I have, Mrs. Lucy," said Sue, with a grateful little face which thanked the lady better than words; "I have got plenty for I don't know how long."

"You do not look as if you were out of heart," said Mrs. Lucy. "You know who can send better times."

"Oh yes, ma'am," said Sue. "He has already."

"Trust Him, dear; and let me know all you want."

Sue stood, sober and silent, while Mrs. Lucy went out at the door; and then she fell down on her knees before one of the chairs and sunk her head on her hands; and was quite still a minute or two, till the knocking sounded again. It was not a gentle tap on the floor just to let her know she was wanted; it was an impatient, quarrelsome, vexatious, "rat, tat, tat, tat, tat, *tat!*—rat-*tat!*—rat-*tat!*" Sue ran up.

The cobbler did not come home that night, and Roland would stay in the house. Sue did all she could to hinder him; for indeed there was nothing for him to sleep on but the pile of leather scraps; but he would not be hindered.

"But your mother, Roland?" she gently asked.

"What of my mother?"

"She will want you."

"How do you know that?"

"I should think she would," said Sue.

"Should you? Well, she thinks, and so do I, that you want me more."

"How good you are, dear Roland!"

"Not very, Sue," said Roland, calmly.

"Do you know what Mrs. Lucy says?" said Sue. "She says that you have your own way in everything."

"Mrs. Lucy might have gone wider from the mark, I suppose," said Roland, blowing the fire.

"Mrs. Lucy is very good," said Sue. "She brought us some tea and sugar this afternoon."

"Did she!" said Roland. "Then what will you do with what Mrs. Halifax sent?"

"Did *she* send us some?" said Sue. "O Roland!"

Roland laughed at her, and Sue did not know what to do with herself; she went and fetched down a quantity of coverlets and things for Roland to wrap himself up and be warm through the night; and begged him to keep a good fire.

The next day the cobbler did not come home. It passed with no visitors except Roland and Mrs. Lucy, who stepped in for a minute. Sue's mother wanted her upstairs nearly the whole day; so there could be little amusement going. On Christmas eve Roland stayed in the house again. But he went off very early in the morning, without seeing Sue, after he had lit the fire.

The snow had not come so soon as Roland thought it would. There was none on the ground on Christmas eve. But when Christmas morning rose, the whole of Beachhead was softly and smoothly covered with white. It had fallen very fast and quietly during the night; the window sills were piled up, the door knob was six inches high, the snow hung like a thatch over the eaves of the houses. The streets were a soft, pure, printless cover of white when Roland first went out; and whatever kept people's feet within doors, whether the dark morning—for the snow still fell—or happy Christmas delays, there was yet hardly a footprint but his to be seen in that part of the street where, some hours later, a sleigh drawn by a horse, and carrying two men and a barrel, drew up before Mr. Peg's door. Sue had heard the tinkle of the bells which the horse bore on his neck; and as it told of the first sleighing that year, she went to the window to look out. There was the sleigh, and one man, and the barrel; the other man had jumped off and was knocking at the front door.

"Very odd!" thought Sue; "what can they want here?"—but she ran downstairs and opened the door. The barrel was rolling over the snow to the house, and the two men were behind pushing it. The cold air, and the yet falling snow, and the white street, the men, and the barrel rolling on towards Sue! Sue was bewildered. But that barrel must go somewhere, and she held the door open.

"What is it?" said Sue. "It does not belong here, does it?"

"Here's 'Mr. Peg' on it," said one of the men; "and this is Mr. Peg's house, ain't it?"

"What is it?" said Sue, in astonishment, as the barrel now stood up on end by the side of her chest.

"It is a barrel of flour, I guess," said the man. "Looks like it, and it comes from Mr. Hoonyman's."

"Flour!" said Sue.

But the men with their heavy snow-shoes clumped out again, and shut the door behind them with a bang. Sue stood and looked.

There was the barrel, full sized, standing on end, one side of it still lightly coated with snow; and there were the snow-marks on the floor of the feet that had been there. It was not a dream. It was a real barrel, and even the snow was not in a hurry to melt away.

Suddenly it flashed into Sue's little mind that it might be a Christmas gift,—and then whoever sent it ought to have been there—when the unwonted rosy colour sprang to her cheeks, and made her for a minute look like a happy child. And whoever sent it ought to have seen, a minute after, the bended head, and heard the thanksgiving that was not spoken, and the prayer, earnest and deep, for a blessing on the friend that had sent it.

Sue had lifted her head, but had not moved, when Roland opened the door.

"O Roland! do you see this?"

"Merry Christmas, Sue," said Roland, gaily.

"O Roland! do you know what this is?"

"It is very like a barrel of flour," said Roland. "I should be surprised if it was anything else."

"But, Roland, who sent it?"

"Why, Sue!—Santa Claus, to be sure. Don't you know what day it is?"

"It did not come down the chimney," said Sue, "*that* I know."

"If Santa Claus had taken me into his confidence, you know, Sue, it would not be honest to betray him. I

wonder what you can do with a barrel of flour, now you have got it."

"Do?" said Sue;—but just then there was another knock at the door. Roland opened it. In came a boy with a long string of fine fish, which Mrs. Binch had sent to Sue.

"Beachhead is waking up," said Roland.

"O Roland!" said Sue, beginning to get into the spirit of the thing—"did you ever see anything like those fish? Oh, tell Mrs. Binch I thank her a great many times, please—a great many times; I am *very* much obliged to her, and so is father. O Roland!—do see!"——

"There is your mother knocking, Sue," said Roland. "Run off, and I'll take care of these fish. You get ready for breakfast."

Sue went off in one direction and Roland in another. He was the first to come back, with a beautifully cleaned fish, which he soon placed upon the coals. He then set the table and got the bread and the tea; and by that time Sue came, as happy and as humble as possible, to enjoy her breakfast. Whether or not Roland had had another breakfast before, he at any rate kept her company in hers, both talking and eating. The fish was declared to be the finest that could come out of the sea, and Roland was probably adjudged to be the best cook on land; if he had been, his work could not have given better satisfaction.

Roland had to go away after breakfast, and told Sue his mother would want him at dinner, and he could not be there again before evening, but then he would come. Sue was satisfied with everything.

Her day was spent for the most part upstairs. But there were some breaks to it. A servant came in the course of the morning, bringing some bottles of wine for her mother, from Mrs. Halifax. Sue was already in a state of happiness that could hardly be heightened, and was in fact endeavouring to bear it with the help of her Bible, for it was in her hand whenever she came downstairs. But her eyes sparkled afresh at this gift, because

it came from Mrs. Halifax, and because it was what her mother wanted. Sue could not wait. She begged the man to open one of the bottles for her; which with no little difficulty was done, without a corkscrew; and then, when he had gone, Sue poured a little into a teacup, and went upstairs with such a face—joy and love were dancing a waltz in it.

A little before noon, there came another knock at the door. A modest knock this was, so gentle that Sue probably did not hear it. The knocker had not patience, or was not scrupulous; he opened the door half way and pushed in a square wooden box, nailed up, and directed; after which he went away again, leaving it there to tell its own tale.

It seemed to tell nothing that Sue could understand. She looked at it when she next came down with all her eyes and on all sides; but it was fast nailed up; she could not by any means open it, and she could not tell what was inside. She easily guessed that it was another "Christmas," but in what form? She sat and looked at it with a face of infinite delight. She walked round it. Nothing was to be made of it but a pine box, tolerably heavy, with her own name and her father's in large black letters on the upper side. Those letters did look lovely. Sue read them a great many times that day, and sat and gazed at the wooden box; but she could do nothing with it till Roland came. He came at last, towards evening. Sue was watching for him.

"O Roland, there you are!—here's another!"

"Another what?" said Roland, gravely.

"Another Christmas gift—look here!"

"Looks very like Christmas," said Roland.

"Dear Roland, won't you get a hammer?"

"A hammer," said Roland. "I suppose Mr. Joist will lend me one."

He went to borrow it, and opened the box. Sue watched with breathless interest while the hammer did its work, and pieces of the cover came up one by one.

"Now, Sue!" said Roland, as he stepped back, and began to draw the nails out of the wood.

Sue drew the things out of the box with slow and cautious fingers, that seemed almost afraid of what they found. She did not say a word, but one or two half breathed "oh's!" There was a nice and complete outfit of clothes for her. On the top lay a paper on which was written

"*For little Susan Peg, from some friends that love her.*"

When she got to the bottom, Sue looked up.

"O Roland! Who sent me these?"

"Some friends of little Susan Peg, that love her," said Roland.

"Did you know about it?"

"I heard my mother speak about it, Sue."

"Did *she* do it?"

"Not she alone. Mrs. Lucy, and some other ladies, all had a hand in it."

"Oh, how good they are!"

It was long before Sue could get up from the floor. Roland stood hammer in hand, looking at her, and smiling. At last Sue packed the box again.

"I don't deserve it all," she said; "but then, I don't deserve anything. Now, I think we will have some tea."

"I shall go and carry back this hammer," said Roland, and then I'm ready. I'm very thirsty."

"Oh, dear Roland!" said Sue, "won't you just open that barrel of flour first?—it will save going for the hammer again, and mother thinks she wants some Pop-robin."

"But what is Pop-robin good for, without milk?" said Roland, as they went to the barrel, which he had rolled into the pantry.

"Oh, now I might get a halfpennyworth of milk," said Sue;—"it is for mother; and now we have so many things we might afford it."

"No, don't you," said Roland. "Mother sends you word—there are enough nails in this barrel—that you may have as much milk as you want from her cow, whenever you will come for it, or I will bring it; so between us I think it will be safe to count upon it."

He was hammering at the barrel-head, and Sue standing by, looking very pleased; her little hand gratefully resting on his shoulder; when a hand was suddenly laid on hers. Sue turned.

"Father!" she exclaimed—"O father!—are you come home?—Oh, I am so glad!"

The cobbler's gray head was stooped almost to the barrel-top, and Sue's arms were round his neck; and how many times they kissed each other I don't believe either of them knew. It seemed impossible for Sue to loose her hold.

"And *you* are here, my boy," said the cobbler, turning to Roland, "doing my work."

"No, sir, I have been doing *mine*," said Roland.

"O father, he has taken such care of me!" said Sue.

"I warrant him," said the cobbler. "If I had known that Roland Halifax was in town, I could have minded my business with more quietness."

"And is it done, father?" said Sue.

"It is done, my child."

"And what have you done with that man?"

"We have declared him upon our judgment, *not guilty*."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" said Sue.

They came back to their tea, all three; and more fish were broiled; and all the Christmas was told over; and nearly all the trial. The jury had been kept in all Christmas day to agree upon their verdict.

From that day the cobbler's affairs improved. Whether his friends exerted themselves to better his condition, now that they knew it, or whether Mr. Ruffin's friends did, or whether other causes came into work, certain it is, that from that time the cobbler's hands had something to do; and more and more till they had plenty. So it came to pass that this poor pair of shoes did not get finished till about a month ago; and then Mr. Krinken must take it into his head that we would fit his little boy, and brought us here—for which we owe him a grudge, as we wanted decidedly to spend our lives with Mr. Peg and his little brown-headed daughter.

"Did Mrs. Peg get well?" said Carl.

"Yes, long ago, and came downstairs; but she was no improvement to the family, though her getting well was."

"I am very sorry that story is done," said Carl. "I want to hear some more about Roland Halifax."

"There is no more to tell," said the shoe.

If Carl had been puzzled on Friday as to what story he would hear, he was yet more doubtful on Saturday. There lay the pine-cone, the hymn-book, and the stocking, on the old chest, and there sat Carl on the floor beside them,—sometimes pulling his fingers and sometimes turning over the three remaining story-tellers, by way of helping him to make up his mind. As a last resort he was taking a meditative survey of the ends of his toes, when a little shrill voice from the chest startled him; and the pine-cone began without more ado.

THE STORY OF THE PINE-CONE.

"WHEW!" said the North wind—"Whew—r—r—r—r!"

The fir-trees heard him coming, and bowed their tall heads very gracefully, as if to tell the wind he could not do much with them. Only some of the little cones who had never been blown about a great deal, felt frightened, and said the wind made their teeth chatter.

"Do you think we can stay on?" asked one little cone; and the others would have said they did not know, but the wind gave the tree such another shake that their words were lost.

"Whew—r—r—r—r!" said the wind.

And again the fir-trees bowed to let him pass, and swayed from side to side, and the great branches creaked and moaned, and flung themselves about in a desperate kind of way; but the leaves played sweet music. It was their fashion whenever the wind blew.

"I think we shall have snow," said the tallest of the fir-trees, looking over the heads of his companions.

"The sky is very clear," remarked a very small and inexperienced fir, who was so short he could not see much of anything.

"Yes," said the tall one, "so you think; but there is a great deal of sky besides that which is over our heads; and I can see the wind gathering handfuls of snow-clouds which he will fling about us presently."

"Yes," repeated the tall fir, with another graceful bend, "I see them—they are coming."

The evergreens were all sorry to hear this, for nothing depressed them so much as snow; the rain they could generally shake off—at least if it did not freeze too hard.

As for the beeches, they said if that was the case they must put off their summer clothes directly. And one little beech, with a great effort, did succeed in shaking off half a dozen green leaves the next time the wind came that way.

"You need not hurry yourselves," said the tall fir—"this is only an early storm—the winter will not come yet. I can still see the sun for a few minutes every day."

And that was true. For a few minutes the sun showed himself above the horizon, and then after making a very small arch in the sky, down he went again. Then came the long afternoon of clear twilight: and the longer night, when the stars threw soft shadows like a young moon, and looked down to see their bright eyes in the deep fiord that lay at the foot of the fir-trees. For this was on the north-west side of Norway; and the fir-trees grew by one of the many inlets of the sea which run far away for miles into the country, and are called fiords.

At the mouth the fiord was so narrow, and the over-hanging trees so thick, that you might have coasted along, backwards and forwards, without perceiving the entrance; but to the country people it was well known and unmistakably marked out by one particular hemlock. Pushing your little boat through its green branches that

dipped their fingers in the water, the fiord opened before you. The banks on each side were for the most part very steep, and often wooded to the water's edge; while sometimes a pitch of bare rocks and a noisy cataract came roughly tumbling down together, pouring disturbance into the smooth waters of the fiord.

The fiord itself was too beautiful to be described. It wound about from rock to rock, now washing gently at the base of a high mountain, and then turning and spreading out, bay-like, where the shore was lower and the hills stood aloof; but everywhere overhung or nodded to by the great trees that looked as if they had known it since it was a mere rill—the beeches and oaks and hemlocks, the tall pines like a ship's mainmast; and most of all, by that glory of those forests—the Norway spruce fir. These watched the fiord everywhere—in the regions of solitude, and in the spots where a little clearing—a waft of blue smoke—the plaintive bleat of a goat mounting up in the world, or the hearty bow-wow! of some hardy little dog that was minding everybody's business as well as his own, told of a human habitation. Behind all—beyond cliff and wood and everything but the blue sky, towered up the peaks of perpetual snow—whose bare heads no man had ever seen.

The fiord could not point heavenward after that fashion. But it reflected every bit of blue that came over it, and even when the skies were dark, and the snow-peaks hid their heads in a cloud, the fiord's reflections were only grave and thoughtful—never gloomy.

And the water was so clear!

Sailing along in a little boat you could look down, down, for twenty fathoms, and see the smooth white sand; with little shells and star-fish, and then the bottom of the fiord rose suddenly up like a rocky mountain—over which the boat passed into a deep gulf on the other side. Then came a plain, and great forests, far down in the water; through which large fishes swam softly about; and then another mountain.

In one of the narrowest parts of the fiord a little spot of cleared and cultivated land lay like a smile between it

and the rough mountain. A mere point of land—a little valley wedged in among the heights that rose cliff beyond cliff towards the blue sky, fringed here and there with fir-trees. The valley smiled none the less for all this roughness; and the little dwelling that there found a foothold seemed rather to court the protection of the cliffs, and to nestle under their shelter. It was such a one as best suited the place.

It was built of great pine logs, roughly squared and laid one upon another, with layers of moss between; while every crevice and crack was well stuffed with the same. The roof was of boards, covered with strips of birch bark; and over all a coating of earth two or three inches deep in which a fine crop of moss had taken root. The windows were large, and well glazed with coarse glass, while very white curtains hung within; and the door was painted in gay colours. Other little huts or houses stood round, forming a sort of square; and furnishing apartments for the pig, the cows, and their winter provision; while one more carefully built than the rest, held all manner of stores for the family. Raised upon posts, that the rats might not enter, the little alpebod kept safe the fish, the venison, the vegetables—even the cloth, yarn, and sometimes clothing, of its humble owners.

In sight of the house, a little way down the fiord, was a wild ravine, skirted on one side with a height of thick woods and rocks; while on the other the rocks stood alone —the sharp ridge rising up hundreds of feet to a ledge in some places not a foot wide. On either side the ridge the declivity was very precipitous, the one depth being filled with forest trees which led on to the wooded hill beyond; while the ravine on the left echoed to the voice of a waterfall, that pouring down over a pile of rocks perhaps two hundred feet high, foamed into the fiord; and then came eddying past the little hut, still bearing the white flakes on its blue waters.

This was all one could see in the valley; but the tall fir-trees looked at long ranges of wooded hills and rocky cliffs, with the fiord in its further windings, and beyond all the snow mountains.

"How cold you must be up there!" said a little pine, who was nearly as high as the tall fir's lower branches. But the fir did not hear him, or perhaps did not take notice, for he was looking off at the fine prospect.

"Yes, it is cold up here," answered one of the fir-cones —"and windy—and there is a great deal of sameness about it. It is just snow and rain, and wind and sunshine, and then snow again."

"That is what it is everywhere," said the wind, as he swept by.

"I cannot help it," said the cone—"I am tired of it. I want to travel, and see the world, and be of some use to society. What can one do in the top of a fir-tree?"

"Why, what can a pine-cone do anywhere?" said some of the beechmast.

"The end of a pine-cone's existence is not to be eaten up, however," retorted the cone sharply. "Neither am I a pine-cone—though people will call me so. We firs hold our heads pretty high, I can tell you. But I will throw myself into the fiord some day, and go to sea. I have no doubt I could sail as well as a boat. It would be a fine thing to discover new islands, and take possession."

"It would be very lonely," said a squirrel, who was gathering beechmast.

"Royally so," said the pine-cone. "There one would be king of all the trees."

"The trees never had but one king, and that was a bramble," said a reed at the water's edge who was well versed in history.

"What nonsense you are all talking!" said the tall fir-tree at length. "My top leaf is at this moment loaded with a snow-flake—there is something sensible for you to think of."

At this moment the hut door opened and a woman came out.

She wore a dark stuff petticoat made very short, with warm stockings and thick shoes; a yellow close-fitting bodice was girdled round her waist, and from under it came out a white kerchief and very full white sleeves. On her head she wore a high white cap.

She looked first at the weather, and then turning towards the fall, she watched or listened for a few minutes—but water, and rocks, and firs were all that eye or ear could find out. Then going up to a line stretched between two of the fir-trees, she felt at some things that hung there to dry.

"I suppose that was her clothes line," said Carl.

"No, it was not," replied the cone—"I might rather call it her *bread* line. The things that hung there were great pieces of the inner bark of the pine-tree, and looked very much like sheets of foolscap paper."

"She did not make bread out of *them*, I should think," said Carl.

"Yes she did," replied the cone. "She made many a loaf of dark bread, by pounding the dry bark and mixing it with flour. It was not particularly bad bread either. So people say—I never tasted it. But the country folks in Norway use it a great deal in hard seasons; and in those woods you often meet great pine-trees that have been stripped of their bark, and that have dried and bleached in the weather till they look as if made of bone or marble."

"Well—the pieces of bark were dry, and Norrska began to take them off the line, for of course the snow would not improve them."

"Who was Norrska?" interrupted Carl.

"The good woman that came out of the house. She took them down, and when they were all in a heap at the foot of the tree she began to carry them off to the alpebod—that is the little storehouse I spoke of. Then she went back into the hut for a minute, and when she came out again she had on a long-sleeved gray woollen jacket, and her luur in her hand."

"What's that?" said Carl.

"The luur is a long trumpet-shaped thing, made of hollow pieces of wood, or pieces of birch bark, tied together, and four or five feet long."

"What was it for?" said Carl.

"Why you shall hear, if you will have patience," said the cone. "Norrska raised the luur with one hand, and

putting her mouth to the little end there came forth from the other sundry sweet and loud sounds, which echoed back among the rocks till they died away far up the mountain."

"But I say," said Carl, "what for?" And he took hold of the pine-cone and gave it a little pinch; but it was pretty sharp, and he let it go again.

The pine-cone settled himself down on the chest, looking just as stiff as ever, and then went on with his story.

Norrska sounded her luur twice or thrice, and presently the head and horns of a red cow showed themselves high up among the rocks. Then came in sight her shoulders and fore feet, and her hind feet and tail, and the whole cow began to descend into the valley; while a dun cow's head showed itself in just the same place and fashion. But when Norrska had once seen that they were coming, she ceased to watch them, and turned to the fall again.

Its white foam looked whiter than ever in the gathering dusk. The gray clouds which were fast closing in overhead sent down a cold gray light, and the water no longer sparkled with the sun's gay beams, but looked leaden, and cold, and deep. Then breasted with snow like the stormy petrel, it came flying down the precipice, to plunge into the deep fiord below. Its very voice seemed changed; for the wind had died away, and the steady roar of the water was the only sound that broke the silence.

There was no living creature in sight,—excepting when a little lemming peeped out of his hole, or an eagle soared across the sky, a mere speck upon its clouds. The cows had reached the valley and now stood quietly chewing the cud, having had the precaution to turn their backs to the wind; and now Norrska fetched the milk pails and drove the red cow up to the milking corner. And as she went, a snowflake fell on her forehead, and another fell on the top of her head; and the fir-trees sighed and bowed their heads to what they could not help. Norrska sighed too.

"The winter is coming," she said, "and the snow; and truly the alpebod is but poorly filled. And Sneeflocken

sick—and Laaft not come home from Lofoden!—And Kline—what can keep him?" And again she looked towards the fall.

Kline was there now—she could see him plainly enough, though he was but a little spot on that sharp ridge by the waterfall. The path itself was hard to find, as it wound about over and under and around the points of rock that met on the ledge. A stranger could scarcely have climbed it but on hands and knees. Yet down there came Kline, sure-footed as a chamois—swiftly down; and singing praises of the rocks, and streams, and woods, and snow as he came. But before he reached the foot of the hill Kline's song stopped,—with the first look at the hut his thoughts had outrun his feet; and with a quieter step now, he came down into the valley and up to where his mother sat milking the red cow. In one hand was a gun, in the other a string of golden plovers.

"How late, Kline, you are!" said Norrska.

"Yes, mother—I tried to get a shot at a reindeer. How is she?"

Norrska silently pointed to a snowflake, which falling on her hand as she talked, had lain for a moment in all its pure beauty, but was now melting fast away. She watched till it disappeared, and then bending her head lower than ever, she resumed her work.

Kline stood silent and thoughtful.

"Perhaps not, mother," he said at length. "Her appetite has been better lately. See—I have these plovers for her to-night, and to-morrow I will have the deer. Think of my finding one in these parts!"

But his mother said no more, and when the pails were full Kline took them from her and carried them into one of the little huts; and then returning, he drove the cows into their little log dwelling, and taking up his birds and gun he walked slowly to the house. But the gaily-painted door was out of tune with his mood, and he turned and went round the back way.

Leaving both gun and birds in the kitchen, Kline opened softly the door leading to one of the bedrooms and went in.

The corner of this room and the sides of the windows were boarded, and the floor was strewed with fresh twigs of the juniper tree; which gave a sweet smell through the room, and make it look pretty too. Of the three windows, two looked towards the fiord and one to the mountain and over the little valley. The bed stood in a recess that had doors like one of your cupboards; but these now were open, and by the bedside was a little white pine-table, and upon it a wooden bowl and spoon—all prettily carved.

"How were they carved?" said Carl.

"The bowl had carved upon it a spray of the wild bramble—twining round with its leaves and berries; and the handle of the spoon was like a wild-duck's head; and the feet of the table were like bears' feet. Kline had done it all, for in Norway the men and boys carve a great deal, and very beautifully; and this bowl and spoon had been made for his little sister as he sat by her bedside, and Kline was very proud of them. The feathers on the duck's head were beautifully done, and the bramble-berries looked pretty enough to eat. But Kline did not once look at them now, for something far prettier lay on the bed, and that was little Sneeflocken."

"What did they call her that for?" said Carl.

"Because that is the name of the snowflakes. And she was just as pure and fresh as they, and had never had the least bit of colour in her cheeks from the time she was a baby. You could scarcely have distinguished them from the pillow but for the fair hair that came between. She was covered with a quilt made of down; for Kline had risked his life almost in climbing to the high difficult places where the eider-ducks build their nests, that he might get the soft down which the mother duck plucks from her own breast to keep her eggs and nestlings warm. And Norrska had made it into a quilt, the warmest thing that could be—while the weight of it was almost nothing."

And beneath this soft quilt Sneeflocken lay, with her eyes closed, and singing softly to herself in the Norse language a hymn, which was something like this:—

"O little child, lie still and sleep!
Jesus is near,
Thou need'st not fear;—
No one need fear, whom God doth keep,
By day or night.
Then lay thee down in slumber deep
Till morning light.

"O little child, thou need'st not wake;
Though bears should prowl,
And wolfish howl,
And watch-dog's bark, the silence break.
Jesus is strong.
And angels watch thee for His sake,
The whole night long.

"O little child, lie still and rest,—
He sweetly sleeps
Whom Jesus keeps,—
And in the morning wake, so blest,
His child to be,
Love every one, but love Him best,—
He first loved thee.

"O little child, when thou must die,
Fear nothing then,—
But say amen!
To God's command; and quiet lie
In His kind hand,
Till He shall say, 'Dear child, come fly
To heaven's bright land.'

'Then with thy angel-wings quick grown
Shalt thou ascend,
To meet thy Friend,—
Jesus the little child will own—
Safe, at His side!
And thou shalt live before the throne
Because He died!"

Kline had to step back into the shadow of the door of the recess, to wipe the tears off his face, before he could

venture to speak to his little sister. But she spoke first.

"Kline!"

"What, dear?" said her brother, coming forward.

"I thought I heard your step," said Sneeflocken, with a smile, and putting up her lips to kiss him. "Where have you been all day?"

"Oh, over the mountains—hunting," said Kline, as cheerfully as he could. "I saw a great reindeer, Flocken; and I mean to go and find him to-morrow. That would fill the alpebod finely, and you would like some venison —wouldn't you, dear?"

"Oh, yes," said Flocken, with a little smile; "but *I* wouldn't kill the deer for that."

"I would," said Kline. "And it would help mother, too."

"I should like to help mother, if I could," said Sneeflocken, putting her little thin hands together. "But Jesus will—I have asked Him."

"Why, you help us all," said Kline; "just as the birds do when they sing, or the sun when it shines."

"Perhaps I shall by-and-by," said the child, smiling again in that grave, quiet way.

"Yes, by-and-by, when you grow up to be a strong woman," said Kline.

"No, Kline," said Sneeflocken, stroking his face. "No, dear Kline—but by-and-by when I go to heaven. Perhaps God will let me help to take care of her then, and of you, too, Kline. But you will not know that it is your little Sneeflocken."

And Kline could only sit and hold her in his arms, and say nothing. The snow fell all that night, and the winter set in early; and the waterfall scattered icicles upon every branch and rock in its way, and then built for itself an ice-trough through which it poured down as noisily as ever. Then the sun never showed his face but for a few minutes, and the rest of the day was twilight. And at night the moon shone splendidly, and the northern lights showed peaks of fire in the heavens; or sometimes there were only the stars, burning clearly in the sky, and

twinkling down in the dark fiord between the shadows of the fir-trees. Now and then a bear would come out and prowl about the little dwelling, or a wolf gave a concert with the waterfall; but cows and pigs were safely shut up; and Foss, the little dog, showed so much disapprobation at the concert, that often the wolves had not one for nights together. Laaft, the father of Kline, got home from Lofoden with his stock of dried fish; and Kline himself had shot his reindeer; and both meat and fish were safely stowed in the alpebod. The wolves knew that; and did not their mouths water sometimes at night till they were fringed with icicles! But they never tried to break in, for the alpebod was strong; and little Foss knew as well as the wolves what good things were there; and scolded terribly if everybody and everything did not keep at a respectful distance. And besides all that, the wolves were afraid of the light that always shone from one room of the little cottage.

"This is a very quiet way of life—ours," said the fir-trees, nodding to each other.

"I am very tired of it," said one of the cones. "It is very cold up here; and really in the dark one cannot see to do much."

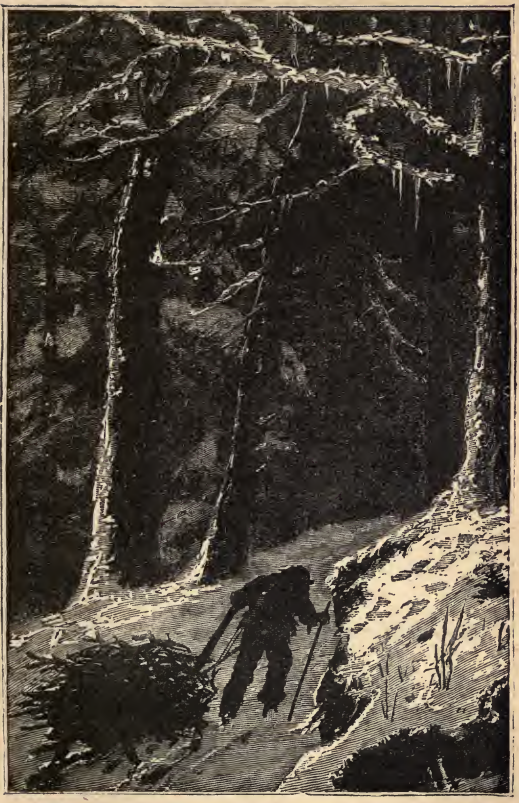
"A fir glories in the frost and the cold and the snow," said the tall tree, proudly. "We are not called upon to do anything but to make sweet music to the wind, and to keep it from blowing too fiercely upon the little hut, and to show our fine heads against the sky. The snow-birds are warm in our arms during the long night, for we have plenty of good clothes all the year round."

The beeches heard this speech, but were too frost-bound to make any answer.

"What became of the discontented pine-cone?" said Carl. "Did he throw himself into the fiord?"

"Yes," said the cone, "at least one night he tried to do so. But he fell on the shore instead—just dropped down at the foot of the fir-tree; and there Kline found him one day, and picked him up and carried him into the house to show Flocken—he was such a large one."

Every night through the winter was that light burning



THE PINE CONE.

in the same room of the hut; and every day did Kline come out with his gun and spend what daylight there was in hunting. Sometimes he brought home a hare or a ptarmigan, or a partridge that he had snared, or a wild-duck; while his father was cutting wood, or away in his boat to catch fish.

"I could get only one partridge to-day, dear Flocken," Kline would say upon his return home; "but perhaps I shall find something better to-morrow."

"Oh, Kline," said his little sister, "how good you are to take so much trouble for me! But it is a pity to kill the birds; they can't make me live, so we might let them live."

"Was not that a fine bird you had yesterday?" said Kline.

"Oh, yes," said Flocken; "it was delicious. I think everything is good that you get for me, and that my mother cooks. But then you know I can't eat much."

If you had seen her as she lay there—so thin, so white—you might as soon have suspected a very snowflake of eating much.

"So it does not make much difference," repeated little Sneeflocken, "what I have; only I do believe, Kline, that I like to have you take so much trouble, and go away in the snow to get things for me. And she put her arms round his neck, and laid her white face against his coarse gray jacket; she stroked and caressed him until Kline thought his heart would burst beneath the weight of that little snowflake.

"When the spring comes," he said, "we will go up the mountain and look for flowers; and I will make you a wreath of violets and fringed pinks, little Flocken."

Sneeflocken stroked his face and smiled, and then she looked grave again.

"And forget-me-nots, Kline," she said, softly, "you will want them, too. The little blue forget-me-nots, they are so like the sky colour. You will think about me, Kline, whenever you see them, for I shall know what the sky is made of then. Where is mother?"

"She is cooking your partridge," said Kline. "Don't you smell it?"

"Oh, yes," said the child, smiling, "and I think the wolves smell it too. How loud they howl!"

"You are not afraid of them?" said her brother, tenderly.

"No," said Sneeflocken, with a strange look of weakness and trust upon her little face. "No, I am not afraid of them, for the Good Shepherd is very strong. I should be afraid if it was not for that. How kind He is, Kline, to think about such poor little children as we are! And it is kind of Him to take me away, too, for I am not very strong—I don't think I could ever be of much use."

"You are of too much use, my little Sneeflocken," said Kline, sadly, "because we should not know what to do without you."

"Why, you will have me, then," said the child, looking up in his face. "Just as you have the flowers now, Kline. And you can think about me, and say that some day you will go up and up to find me."

"Up to find you!" said Laaft, who with Norrska had just entered the room. "Are you going to play hide-and-seek with Kline upon the mountains, my little dear?"

But Norrska asked no such question, for she knew what Sneeflocken meant, well enough; but she brought the roast partridge to the bedside, on a little wooden plate that had a row of pine-cones carved all round the edge; and sitting down on the bed she watched the child eat her scanty supper, when Kline had lifted her up and wrapped an old cloak about her.

Little Foss had followed them in, and now he sat wagging his tail and beating the floor with it, just because he felt uncomfortable, and didn't know what to do with himself—not at all because he smelt the partridge. For he knew perfectly well that Sneeflocken was sick; and when she had finished her supper, and called "Foss! Foss!" the little dog ran to the bed, and standing as high as he could on his hind legs thrust his cold nose into her hand, and whined and whimpered with joy and

sorrow. Then in a tumult of excitement, he dashed out of the house to bark at the wolves again.

Thus they watched her, by day and by night, through the long winter; but before the first spring days came, the little snowflake had melted away and sunk down into the brown earth.

They made her grave within the little grounds, just between the house windows and the mountain; where the fir shadows could touch it sometimes, but where the sunlight came as well. And within the little white railing that enclosed the grave, they placed an upright slab of wood, upon which Kline had carved these words, as Norrska desired him :—

"*Say unto her,—Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, 'It is well.'*"

The grass grew green and fresh there, and the little blue forget-me-nots that Kline had planted about the grave soon covered it with their flowers. And sometimes when Kline stood there leaning over the paling, he almost fancied that it was as she said,—that God had sent her to take care of them; and that it was not the soft spring wind which stroked his face, but the hand of his little Sneeflocken.

"Were you that discontented pine-cone?" said Carl, when he had sat for some time thinking over the story.

"Yes," said the cone, "and I was carried into the house as I told you. And then because Sneeflocken had once held me in her little hand, Kline said he would keep me always."

"But I say!" said Carl, knitting his brows and looking very eager; "how did you get here?"

"Because other people were as foolish as I was, and did not know when they were well off," said the cone. "For Kline was your mother's grandfather; and when he died, and she left her home to follow the fortunes of John Krinken, she brought the old pine-cone with her; to remember the tall fir-trees that waved above the old hut in Norway, and to remind her of little Foss, and Kline, and Sneeflocken."

THE STORY OF THE HYMN-BOOK.

"CLARY! Clary!—wake up! you will be late. See how light it is getting."

"Well, mother—but I am so tired! What is the good of living so, mother?"

"One must live somehow, child, till one's time comes to die."

Clary did not say, but she thought, as she raised herself slowly from the hard little straw bed, that it did not matter how soon that time came for her. Work! work!—living to work, and working to live! Working hard too, and for what a pittance of life! Was it living to sleep half as much as she wanted, and then to get up in the cold gray dawn of a winter's morning, get three or four dirty children out of bed and dress them in such clothes as they had; and then, after as much breakfast as she had had sleep, to take that long cold walk in her old straw bonnet and thin cotton shawl to the printing-office,—there to stand all day supplying the busy iron fingers of the press? How thin and blue her own were!

Poor Clary! In truth she did not know what it was to live, in the real sense of the word; her mind looked back to no happier time than the present; for though she could well remember being a dirty little child like her brothers and sisters, with nothing to do but play or quarrel as she felt inclined, yet she by no means wished the time back again. The death of her father, and the consequent absence of his bottle and his wild fits of intoxication, had left the family in a peaceful state compared with those days; and since Clary had been at the printing-office she had learned to love the sight of decently dressed people—had begun to take more pains to look nice herself; and above all, had begun to feel that she would like to be happy, and well-dressed, and respectable, if she only knew how. But they were very, very poor, and there were a cluster of little mouths to fill, as clamorous and wide open as a nest of young swallows, and never saying "enough." And though she

kept her face cleaner and her hair smoother, and when she could get them sewed hooks and eyes on her dress, the march of improvement rested there; and her face was as hopeless, her eye as dull, as ever. For nobody had ever taught Clary about that "one thing needful" which can make up for the want of all others. She had never been to church, she had never read the Bible—and indeed had none to read. She thought that nothing but money could make them happy; she thought nobody could want anything but money; and was really not much surprised that people were so loath to part with it. They must be so, she thought, or the poor press-tenders could not be so very far removed from the heads of the concern in comfortable appearance.

There were many of the women indeed that spent more upon their dress than she did. A tawdry silk jacket worked all day at her right hand, and a pair of earrings dangled all day before her; while her own dress was but the coarsest cotton; but Clary had somehow or other begun to wish for neatness and comfort—of course finery was forgotten.

Never had she been much inclined to envy anybody, till one day the head printer brought his two little children to the office; and Clary's heart beat in quick time to her sorrowful thoughts all the hours after. Oh, to see those children at home, with clean faces, and smooth hair, and whole frocks and trousers! And now there were rags and dirt and tangled locks; and no time to mend matters, and small stock of soap and combs, or needles to mend with. Clary went straight to bed when she got home that night; and it was on the next morning that she awoke with the question—

"Mother, what is the use of living so?"

But as her mother had said, she must live somehow; and getting wearily out of bed, hastily too, for it was indeed late, Clary easily dressed herself in such clothes as she had; and then, having with some difficulty fastened the children into theirs, she seated them at the table where her mother had by this time placed the breakfast; and herself stood by, drinking a cup of the

miserable coffee and tying on her bonnet at the same time.

"Going to wash to-day, mother?"

"Yes."

"Then I'll take some bread, and not try to come home to dinner."

This was the ordinary course of things. Clary at the printing-press, and her mother doing a day's work for people well off in the world; while the younger children were locked in or locked out, as the case might be.

It was a foggy December morning,—not very cold, but with a drizzling mist that was more chilling than snow; and by the time Clary reached the office she felt as moody and uncomfortable as the weather. It was warm enough in the office, but not very cheerful, she thought; though some of the men looked as if they enjoyed life sufficiently well, as with sleeves rolled up they whistled softly over their work, keeping time with their heads if the tune were a particularly lively one.

Clary put her bonnet and shawl in their place, and went to the press she always tended. It was motionless now, and a man was just putting in a new set of plates. Clary hardly noticed what he was doing—it mattered so little to her what words were printed on those great sheets of paper that she handled every day; though she could read very well; but she stood listlessly.

"What is the matter, Clary?" said the man. "You look dumpish this morning. I've given you a new piece of work here that will be good for that—they say poetry is excellent for the spirits."

Something good for her! She knew the man spoke jestingly, and yet as he walked off Clary thought she would look and see what it was that he had been talking about. She had seen type enough to be able to spell it backwards, and bending over the plates she read at the corner next her—

"*Oh, how happy*"—

And then the machine was suddenly put in motion; and not faster could she supply the sheets, than the press

drew them in, printed them, and tossed them out in a nice pile at one end. Clary could not stop for one instant. But she had something to think about. Again and again she repeated those three words to herself, and wondered of whom they spoke, and what could be the rest of the sentence. She could guess; it must mean the people who were rich, and had plenty of clothes, and plenty to eat, and time to sleep, and to walk about in the sunshine. The people who bought the meat that she saw hanging up in the butchers' shops, which she hardly knew by name, and much less by taste; the beautiful ladies that she sometimes saw in Broadway—when she happened to get through work a little earlier than usual—wrapped up in furs and velvets, and looking as if they would not know cotton print when they saw it,—the children that she had seen looking out of carriage windows with little white lap-dogs: the curling ears on the heads of the dogs, and the curling feathers on the heads of the children, seeming to Clary almost equally beautiful. Yes, those must be the happy people; but then she would very much like to know more about them,—to read all those stories which the press was no doubt printing off, of these same happy people, who never were poor, and who had no little ragged brothers and sisters. For the first time in her life Clary wished the press would get out of order, for some other reason than because she was tired. Her mind worked and worked upon those three words till she was almost wild with the desire to read more. Perhaps it told the way to be rich and happy,—and that cruel press kept moving just as fast as possible. Not till twelve o'clock did it make a pause. But at twelve o'clock there was a sudden hush; and hardly had the rollers stopped their rolling, before Clary had left her place and gone to that corner of the pile of printed sheets where she knew the words must be. Yes, they were there—she found them easy enough; but what were they?

"Oh how happy are they
Who the Saviour obey,
And have laid up their treasure above."

Poor Clary! she could almost have cried over her disappointment; for if the words had been Greek she could hardly have been more puzzled as to their meaning. As I have said, she had never been to church—she had never read the Bible; and if she had ever heard the Saviour's name, it was from those who spoke it with neither love nor reverence. Her father had been a drunkard,—her mother was a hard-working, well-meaning woman, but as ignorant as Clary herself. No preacher of the gospel had ever set foot in their house,—and "how should they believe on Him of whom they had not heard?"

So Clary puzzled over the lines and could make nothing of them. The word *treasure* she did indeed understand; but where it was to be laid up, and how, were as far from her as ever. And constantly her mind went back to that second line—"*Who the Saviour obey.*"

"I wonder if I could do that?" she thought to herself, "if I only knew how. Mother always said I was good about obeying. It must be so pleasant to be happy. It does not say that nobody can do it but rich people,"—and again she read the words. They were at the bottom of the sheet, and the next might not come to her press at all, or not for some days. She looked over the rest of the sheet. A great many of the hymns she could make nothing of at all; the very words—"missionary," and "convert," and "ransom," were strange to her. Then this hymn caught her eye, and she read—

"Come to the mercy-seat—
Come to the place of prayer;
Come, little children, to His feet,
In whom ye live and are.

"Come to your God in prayer;
Come to your Saviour now—
While youthful skies are bright and fair,
And health is on your brow."

Clary read no further. That did not suit her, she thought—there was nothing bright about her way of life or herself. It seemed the old thing again,—the

happy rich people. She went back and read the first one over, and then she sought further; wearily glancing from hymn to hymn, but with a longing that not even the hard words could check. At last she saw one verse, the first word of which she knew well enough—

> "Poor, weak, and worthless, though I am,
> I have a rich Almighty Friend,—
> Jesus the Saviour is His name—
> He freely loves, and without end."

The words went right to the sore spot in Clary's heart —the spot which had ached for many a long day. Somebody to love her—a rich friend. If she had written down her own wishes, they could hardly have been more perfectly expressed; and the tears came so fast, that she had to move away lest they should blot the paper. Bitter tears they were, yet not such as she had often shed; for, she knew not how, those words seemed to carry a possible hope of fulfilment—a half promise—which her own imaginations had never done. And the first line suited her so exactly—

> "Poor, weak, and worthless"——

"I am all that," thought Clary; "but if this rich Friend loved one poor person, he might another. 'Jesus, the Saviour'—that must be the same that the other verse speaks of. '*How happy are they who the Saviour obey*'—Oh, I wish I knew how—I would do anything in the world to be happy! And I suppose all these rich people know all about Him, and obey Him, and that makes them so happy; for if He loves poor people, He must love the rich a great deal more."

One o'clock!

The great clock struck, and the people came tramping back to their work, or rose up from the corners where they had been eating such dinner as they had brought. Clary had forgotten all about hers—certainly it was an easy dinner to forget—but all the afternoon as the press kept on its busy way, she lived upon these two verses which she had learned by heart.

She had no chance to read more when they left off work at night; but all the way home she scarce saw either rich or poor, for the intentness with which her mind studied those words, and the hope and determination with which she resolved to find out of whom they spoke. She almost felt as if she had found Him already —it seemed as if she was less friendless than she had been in the morning; and though once or twice the remembered words filled her eyes with tears, any one who knew Clary would have wondered at the step with which she went home.

"Where did she read those words?" said Carl, who had listened with deep attention.

"On my 272nd page," replied the hymn-book. "For it so happened that I was printing that very day."

Carl turned to the 272nd page and read the words, and then shutting the hymn-book desired him to go on with his story.

"What made you so early, Clary?" said her mother, who had got home first.

"Early is it?" said Clary, when she could get breath to speak—for she had run up all the three pair of stairs to their little room. "It is the same time as it always is, mother—only maybe I walked fast. Oh, mother! I have had such a happy day!"

"A happy day!" said her mother, looking up in amazement at the life of her voice and face, that were wont to be so dull and listless. "Well, child, I'm glad of it,—you never had many."

"Such a happy day!" repeated Clary. "Oh, mother —I read such beautiful words at the printing-office!"

"Did you fetch the soap I wanted?" inquired her mother.

No—Clary had forgotten it.

"Well, don't be so happy to-morrow as to make you forget it," said her mother. "Every living child here is as dirty as a pig, and no way of making them cleaner. Tidy up the room a little, can't you, Clary? I have stood upon my two feet all day."

So had Clary, and some nights she would have said as

much; but now that new half hope of being happy—that new desire of doing all that anybody could want her to do (she didn't know why), gave her two feet new strength; and she not only "tidied up" the room, but even found a little piece of soap to wash the children with; and then gave them their supper and put them to bed with far less noise and confusion than usual.

Her mother was already seated by the one tallow candle, making coarse shirts and overalls for a wholesale dealer; and Clary, having at last found her thimble in the pocket of the smallest pair of trousers, sat down to work too. Never had her fingers moved so fast.

"Mother," she said, after a while, "did you ever hear anybody talk about the Saviour?"

Her mother stared.

"What on earth, child!" she said. "Where have you been, and who has been putting such notions in your head?"

"Nobody," said Clary, "and I've been nowhere—only to the office, the same as usual. But I read some beautiful verses there, mother, at dinner time, that they were printing off on my press; and they made me feel so—I can't tell you how. But oh, mother, they told about some great rich Friend of poor people—poor people like us, mother—worth nothing at all, they said; and that everybody who obeyed Him was happy."

"You had better not plague your head with such stuff," said her mother. "Nobody cares about poor folks like us. Why, child, rich people wouldn't touch us with a pair of tongs. Haven't I seen them draw up their dresses as I went by, because mine was cotton, and maybe not over clean, because I couldn't buy soap and bread both? I tell you, Clary, rich folks think the poor has no right to breathe in the same world with them. I don't want to breathe in it long for one."

"It didn't say rich *people*," said Clary, thoughtfully, "but only this one—

> 'Poor, weak, and worthless though I am,
> I have a rich, Almighty Friend.'

Oh, mother! I wish I had!"

"Come, child, hold your tongue!" said her mother, but not unkindly, for something in Clary's look and tone had stirred the long deadened feeling within her. "I tell you, child, we must eat; and how is your work to get done if you sit there crying in that fashion? The candle is almost burnt out, too, and not another scrap in the house."

Clary dried her tears, and went on with the overalls until the candle had flickered its last; and then groped her way in the dark to the little bed she and her mother occupied by that of the five children. For sleeping all together thus, the coverings went further. Dark and miserable it was; and yet when Clary laid herself down, overtaken at last by the sleep which had pursued her all the evening, the last thought in the poor child's mind was of those hymns—the word on which her heart went to sleep was that "Name which is above every name."

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!"

To Clary's great sorrow and disappointment, when she went next day to the printing-office, the pile of printed paper had been removed; and not only so, but a new set of plates given her instead of those of the hymn-book. Clary's only comfort was to repeat over and over to herself the words she had already learned, and to try to get at their meaning. Sometimes she thought she would ask the foreman, who was very pleasant and good-natured, but that was only while he was at some other press; whenever he came near hers, Clary was frightened, and held her head down lest he should guess what she was thinking of. And as week after week passed on, she grew very weary and discouraged; yet still clinging to those words as the last hope she had. If she could possibly have forgotten them, she would have been almost desperate.

The winter passed, and the spring came; and it was pleasanter now to go down to the printing-office in the early morning and to walk home at night; and she could hear other people's canaries sing, and see the green grass

THE HYMN BOOK.

and flowers in other people's courtyards; and on Sunday, as she had no work, she could sit out on the doorstep, if there were not too many children about, or walk away from that miserable street into some pleasanter one.

She had walked about for a long time one Sunday, watching the people that were coming from afternoon church; and when the sun was leaving the street she turned to leave it too, taking a little cross street which she had never been in before.

It hardly deserved the name of street, for it was not many yards in length. The houses were not of the largest, but they looked neat and comfortable, with thin green blinds and gay curtains; and spring was there in her earliest dress—a green ground, well spotted with hyacinths, snowdrops, and crocuses. It was very quiet, too, cut short as it was at both ends; and the Sabbath of the great city seemed to have quitted Broadway and established itself here.

Upon one of the low flights of steps, Clary saw as she approached it a little girl seated, with a book in her hand. Wearing a dress after the very pattern of spring, a little warm shawl over her shoulders, and in a little chair that was just big enough, she sat there in the warm sunshine which streamed down through an opening between the houses, turning over the leaves of the book. If you had guessed the child's name from her looks, you would have called her "Sweet Content."

Clary stopped a little way off to look at her, thinking bitterly of the five children she had left playing in the dirt at home; and as she stopped, the little girl began to sing—

> "Oh, how happy are they
> Who the Saviour obey,
> And have laid up their treasure above."

The little voice had only brought these words to Clary's ear, when a carriage came rolling by, and the rest of the verse was lost; but in an instant Clary was at the house, and feeling that this was the only chance she ever should have, she opened the little gate and went in.

The child ceased singing, and looked up at her in some surprise.

"I want to know"—said Clary—and then suddenly recollecting her own poor dress, and comparing it with the little picture before her, she stopped short. But the words must come—they were spoken almost before Clary herself was aware.

"Will you please to tell me who the Saviour is?"

And then blushing and frightened, she could almost have run away, but something held her fast.

The child's eyes grew more more and more wondering.

"Come in," she said, gravely, getting up from her chair, and with some difficulty keeping the book and the little shawl in their places.

But Clary drew back.

"Oh yes—come in," said the child, tucking the little book under her arm, and holding out her hand to Clary.

"Please come in—mother will tell you."

And following her little conductor, Clary found herself the next minute in a pleasant, plain, and very neat room.

"Mother," said the child, opening a door into the next room, but still keeping her eye upon Clary lest she should run away, "Mother, here is a girl who never heard about Jesus."

"I don't understand thee, Eunice," said a pleasant voice, "but I will come." And a most pleasant face and figure followed the voice.

"What did thee say, child?" she inquired, with only a glance towards Clary.

"Tell mother what you want," said the child, encouragingly. "Mother, she never heard about Jesus."

"Thee never heard about Him, poor child," said the lady, approaching Clary. "And how dost thou live in this world of troubles, without such a Friend?"

"I don't know, ma'am," said Clary, weeping. "We are very poor, and we never had any friends; and a long time ago in the winter I read a verse at the printing-office about some one who loved poor people, and I thought perhaps He would help us if He knew about us."

"He knows all about thee now," said the good Mrs. Allen, with a look of strange wonder and pity on her pleasant face.

"Sit down here, child, I will tell thee. Didst thou never hear about God?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Clary, hesitatingly, "I believe I have. Mother says, 'God help us!' sometimes. But we are very poor, nobody thinks much about us."

"God is the helper of the poor, and the Father of the fatherless," said Mrs. Allen, with a grave but gentle voice, "thee must not doubt that. Listen. We had all sinned against God, and His justice said that we must all be punished, that we must be miserable in this world, and when we die must go where no one can ever be happy. But though we were all so bad, God pitied us, and loved us still; yet He could not forgive us, for He is perfectly just. It was as if we owed Him a great debt, and until that debt was paid we could not be His children. But we had nothing to pay. Then the Son of God came down to earth, and bore all our sins and sorrows, and died for us, and paid our great debt with His own most precious blood. This is Jesus, the Saviour."

"Yes, ma'am," said Clary, whose heart had followed every word, "that is what the verse said—

> 'Jesus the Saviour is His name,
> He freely loves, and without end.'"

She stood as if forgetting there was any one in the room; er eyes fixed on the ground, and the quiet tears running down from them, her hands clasped with an earnestness that showed how eagerly her mind was taking in that "good news"—"peace on earth and goodwill toward men," which was now preached to her for the first time.

Little Eunice looked wistfully at her mother, but neither of them spoke.

At length Mrs. Allen came softly to Clary, and laying her hand on the bowed head she said, "Jesus is the friend of sinners; but then they must strive to sin no

more. Wilt thou do it? wilt thou love and obey the Saviour who has done so much for thee?"

A sunbeam shot across the girl's face, as she looked up for one moment, and then bursting into tears, she said, "Oh, if I knew how!"

"Ask Him, and He will teach thee. Pray to Jesus whenever thou art in trouble; when thy sins are too strong for thee, and thy love to Him too faint, when thou art tired, or sick, or discouraged. Ask Him to love thee, and make thee His child, ask Him to prepare a place for thee in heaven. For He hath said, 'If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.'"

Little Eunice had gone softly out of the room while her mother spoke, and now returned with a little book, which was quietly placed in Clary's hand after a look of assent from her mother.

"That is a Bible," said Eunice, with a face of great pleasure. "And you may have it and keep it always. I wish I had a hymn-book for you, too; but I have only got this one, and my Sunday-school teacher gave it to me last Sunday. But the Bible is the word of God, and it will tell you all about Jesus; and every bit of it is perfectly true. Oh, you will love it so much! everybody does who loves Jesus. And won't you come and read in my hymn-book sometimes?"

"Yes; come very often," said Mrs. Allen, "and we will talk of these things."

And with a heart too full to speak, Clary left the house.

But oh, what a different walk home!

"How happy are they
Who the Saviour obey."

She could understand that now, for with the simple faith of a child she believed what had been told her, and with her whole heart received the Friend of sinners to be her Friend. Her earnest prayer that night, her one desire, was to be His child and servant; to obey Him then became sweet work; and thenceforth, through all Clary's life, if any one had called her poor, she would

have answered out of the little hymn-book that Eunice gave her for a Christmas present—

> "Who made my heaven secure,
> Will here all good provide ·
> Whilst Christ is rich, can I be poor ?
> What can I want beside ?"

"Is that all ?" said Carl, when he had waited about two minutes for more.

"That is the story of one of my leaves," said the hymn-book.

"Well, I want to hear about all the others," said Carl; "so tell me."

"I can't," said the hymn-book; "it would take me six weeks."

"Were you Clary's hymn-book ?" said Carl.

"No, I was the other; that belonged to little Eunice. But years after that, several of us met in an old auction-room, and there I learned some of the particulars that I have told you."

"What is an auction-room ?" said Carl.

"It is a sort of intelligence-office for books," replied the collection. "There I got the situation of 'companion to a lady,' and went on a long sea voyage. I had nothing to do but to comfort her, however."

"And did you do it ?" said Carl.

"Yes; very often," said the hymn-book. "Perhaps as much as anything else, except her Bible."

THE STORY OF THE CORK BOAT.

"Now, my pretty little boat," said Carl, the next day, "you shall tell me your story. I will hear you before that ugly old stocking."

Carl was lying flat on his back on the floor, holding the boat up at arm's length, over his head, looking at it and turning it about. It was a very complete little boat.

"I shall teach you not to trust to appearances," said the boat.

"What do you mean?" said Carl.

"I mean, that when you have looked at me, you have got the best of me."

"That is very apt to be the way with pretty things," said the stocking.

"No it isn't!" said Carl. For he had more than once known his mother call him a "pretty boy."

"However that may be," said the boat, "I can't tell a story."

"Can't tell a story! yes, you can," said Carl. "Do it at once."

"I have not any to tell," said the boat. "I was once of some use in the world, but now I am of none, except to be looked at."

"Yes; you are of use," said Carl, "for I like you; and you can tell a story too, if you have a mind, as well as the pine cone."

"The pine cone has had better experience," said the boat, "and has kept good society. For me, I have always lived on the outside of things, ever since I can remember, and never knew what was going on in the world, any more than I knew what was going on inside of my old tree. All I knew was, that I carried up sap for its branches; when it came down again, or what became of it, I never saw."

"Where were you then?" said Carl.

"On the outside of a great evergreen oak, in a forest of Valencia. I was a piece of its bark. I wish I was there now. But the outer bark of those trees gets dead after a while—and then the country people come and cut it off and sell it out of the land."

"And were you dead and sold off?" said Carl.

"To be sure I was. As fine a piece of cork as ever grew. I had been growing nine years since the tree was cut before."

"Well, but tell me your story!" said Carl.

"I tell you," said the little boat, "I have not any story. There was nothing to be seen in the forest but the great shades of the kingly oaks, and the birds that revelled in the solitude of their thick branches, and the

martens, and such animals. It was fine there, though. The north winds, which the pine cone says so shake the heads of the fir-trees in his country, never trouble anything in mine. The snow never lay on the glossy leaves of my parent oak. But no Norrska lived there, or if she did, I never knew her. Nobody came near us, unless a stray peasant now and then passed through. And when I was cut down, I was packed up and shipped off to England, and shifted from hand to hand, till John Krinken took it into his head, years ago, to make a sort of cork jacket of me, with one or two of my companions; and I have been tumbling about in his possession ever since. He has done for me now. I am prettier than I ever was before, but I shall never be of any use again. I shall try the water, I suppose, again a few times for your pleasure, and then probably I shall try the fire, for the same."

"The fire! No, indeed," said Carl, "I'm not going to burn you up. I am going to see you sail this minute, since you won't do anything else. You old stocking, you may wait till I come back—I don't believe *you have* got much of a story."

And Carl sprang up and went forthwith to the beach to find a quiet bit of shallow water in some nook where it would be safe to float his cork boat. But the waves were beating pretty high that day, and the tide coming in, and altogether there was too much commotion on the beach to suit the little *Santa Claus*, as he had named her. So Carl discontentedly came back, and set up the little boat to dry, and turned to the old stocking.

THE STORY OF THE STOCKING.

"It is too bad!" said Carl. "I have heard six stories and a little piece of one, and now there is nothing left but this old stocking!"

"I believe I will not tell you my story at all," said the stocking.

"But you shall," said Carl, "or else I will cut you all up into little pieces."

"Then you certainly will never hear it," said the stocking.

"Well, now," said Carl, "what a disagreeable old stocking you are. Why don't you begin at once?"

"I am tired of always being at the foot," said the stocking; "as one may say, at the fag end. And besides, your way of speaking is not proper. I suppose you have been told as much before. This is not the way little boys used to speak when *I* was knit."

"You are only a stocking," said Carl.

"Everything that is worth speaking to at all, is worth speaking to politely," replied the stocking.

"I can't help it," said Carl, "you might tell me your story, then. I am sure one of my own red stockings would tell its story in a minute."

"Yes," said the gray stocking; "and the story would be 'Lived on little Carl's foot all my life, and never saw anything.'"

"It would not be true, then," said Carl, "for I never wear them except on Sundays. Mother says she can't afford it."

"Nobody afforded it once," said the stocking. "My ancestors were not heard of until ten or eleven hundred years ago, and then they were made of leather or linen. And then people wore cloth hose; and then, some time in the sixteenth century, silk stockings made their appearance in England. But there was never a pair of knit woollen stockings until the year 1564."

"I say," said Carl, "do stop, will you, and go on with your story." And putting his hand down into the old stocking, he stretched it out as far as he could on his little fingers.

"You had better amuse yourself in some other way," said the stocking. "If my yarn should break, it will be the worse for your story."

"Well, why don't you begin, then?" said Carl, laying him down again.

"It is not always pleasant to recount one's misfor-

tunes," said the stocking, "and I have come down in the world sadly. You would hardly think it, I dare say, but I did once belong to a very good family."

"So you do now," said Carl. "There never was anybody in the world better than my mother; and father is very good too."

"Yes," said the stocking again. "Mrs. Krinken does seem to be quite a respectable woman for her station in life, very neat about her house, and I presume makes most excellent porridge. But you see, where I used to live, porridge had never even been heard of. I declare," said the stocking, "I can hardly believe it myself, I think my senses are getting blunted. I have lain in that chest so long with a string of red onions, that I have really almost forgotten what musk smells like! But my Lady Darlington always fainted away if anybody mentioned onions, so of course the old squire never had them on the dinner table even. A fine old gentleman he was; not very tall, but as straight almost as ever; and with ruddy cheeks, and hair that was not white but silver colour. His hand shook a little sometimes, but his heart never—and his voice was as clear as a whistle. His step went cheerfully about the house and grounds, although it was only to the music of his walking-stick; and that was music truly, to all the poor of the neighbourhood. His stick was like him. He would have neither gold nor silver head to it, but it was all of good English oak, the top finely carved into a supposed likeness of Edward the Confessor.

"As for my lady, she was all stateliness, very beautiful too, or had been; and the sound of her dress was like the wings of a wild bird."

"I think I shall like to hear this story," said Carl, seating himself on his box and clapping his hands together once or twice.

"I dare say you will," said the stocking, "when I tell it to you. Well—

"A great many years ago it was Christmas Eve at Squire Darlington's, and the squire sat alone in his wide hall. Every window was festooned with ivy leaves and holly, which twisted about the old carving, and drooped,

and hung round the silver sconces, and thence downward towards the floor. The silver hands of the sconces held tall wax candles, but they were not lit. The picture frames wore wreaths from which the old portraits looked out gloomily enough, not finding the adornment so becoming as they had done a century or so before; and even the squire's high-backed chair was crowned with a bunch of holly-berry. There was no danger of their being in his way, for he rarely leaned back in his chair, but sat up quite straight, with one hand on his knee and the other on the arm of his chair. On that particular evening his hand rested on me; for I and my companion stocking had been put on for the first time."

"I don't see how he could get his hand on his stocking," said Carl, "if he sat up. Look—I couldn't touch mine."

"You need not try to tell me anything about stockings," replied that article of dress, somewhat contemptuously. "I know their limits as well as most people. But in those days, Master Carl, gentlemen wore what they called small-clothes, — very different from your new-fangled pantaloons."

"I don't wear pantaloons," said Carl; "I wear trousers." But the stocking did not heed the interruption.

"The small-clothes reached only to the knee—a little above or a little below—and so met the long stockings half-way. Some people wore very fanciful stockings, of different colours and embroidered; but Squire Darlington's were always of gray woollen yarn, very fine and soft, as you see I am, and tied above the knee with black ribbons; and his shoes were always black, with large black bows and silver buckles.

"He sat there alone in the wide hall, with one hand on me, and his eyes fixed upon the fire, waiting for the arrival of the Yule Log. For in those days the night before Yule or Christmas the chief fire in the house was piled up with an immense log, which was cut and brought in with great rejoicing and ceremony, and lighted with a brand saved from the log of last year. All the servants in the house had gone out to help to roll the log and in-

crease the noise, and the fire of the day had burnt down to a mere heap of red coals; and the hall was so still you could almost hear the ivy leaves rustle on the old wall outside. I have no doubt the squire did hear them."

"What did he stay there for?" said Carl. "Was he thinking?"

"He might have been," said the stocking—"indeed I rather think he was, for he stroked and patted me two or three times. Or he might have been listening to the wind singing its Christmas song."

"Can the wind sing?" said Carl.

"Ay, and sigh too. Most of all about the time of other people's holidays. It is a wild, sighing kind of a song at best—whistled and sung, and sighed together—sometimes round the house, and sometimes through a keyhole. I heard what it said that night, well enough. You won't understand it, but this was it:—

'Christmas again!—Christmas again!
With its holly-berries so bright and red;
They gleam in the wood, they grow by the lane;
Oh, hath not Christmas a joyful tread?

'Christmas again!—Christmas again!
What does it find? and what does it bring?
And what does it miss, that should remain?
Oh! Christmas time is a wonderful thing.

'Christmas again! Christmas again!
There are bright green leaves on the holly tree;
But wither'd leaves fly over the plain,
And the forests are brown and bare to see.

'Christmas again! Christmas again!
The snow lies light, and the wind is cold;
But the wind—it reacheth some hearts of pain,
And the snow—it falleth on heads grown old.

'Christmas again! Christmas again!
What kindling fires flash through the hall!
The flames may flash, but the shadows remain;
And where do the shadows this night fall?

'Christmas again! Christmas again!
It looks through the windows—it treads the floor;
Seeking for what earth could not retain—
Watching for those who will come no more.

'Christmas again! Christmas again!
Why doth not the pride of the house appear?
Where is the sound of her silken train?
And that empty chair—what doeth it here?

'Christmas again! Christmas again!
With hearts as light as ever did bound;
And feet as pretty as ever were fain
To tread a measure the hall around.

'Christmas again! Christmas again!
O thoughts, be silent! who call'd for ye?
Must Christmas time be a time of pain,
Because of the loved from pain set free?

'Christmas again! Christmas again!
Once Christmas and joy came hand in hand;
The hall may its holiday look regain,—
But the empty chai s must empty stand.'

The wind took much less time to sing the song than I have taken to tell it," said the stocking; "a low sigh round the house, and a whistle or two, told all. Then suddenly a door at the lower end of the hall flew open, and a boy sprang in, exclaiming—'Grandfather, it is coming!'

He was dressed just after the fashion of the old squire, only with delicate white stockings and black velvet small-clothes; something like the knickerbockers little boys wear now, while his long flapped waistcoat was gaily flowered, and his shoes had crimson rosettes. And almost as he spoke, a side door opened, and my lady glided in, her dress rustling softly as she came; while the wind rushed in after her, and tossed and waved the feathers in her tall headdress.

There was heard a distant murmur of shouts and laughter, and young Edric clapped his hands and then

stood still to listen; and presently, the whole troop of servants poured into the hall, from that same door at the lower end. All were dressed in the best and gayest clothes they had; the women wore ivy wreaths, and the men carried sprigs of holly at their button-holes. First came a number bearing torches; then many others, rolling, and pulling, and pushing the great log, on which one of the men-servants, whimsically dressed, was endeavouring to keep his seat; while every other man, woman, and child about the place, crowded in after.

Then the log was rolled into the great fireplace, and duly lighted; and everybody clapped hands and rejoiced in its red glow, and Master Edric shouted as loud as the rest.

"Edric," said my lady, when the hall was quiet once more though not empty, for all the household were to spend Christmas eve there together—"Edric, go take a partner, and dance us a minuet."

And Edric walked round the hall till he came to little May Underwood, the forester's daughter; and then bringing the white stockings and the crimson rosettes close side by side together, and making her a low bow, he took her hand and led her out upon the polished floor.

The Yule Log was in a full blaze now, and the light shone from end to end of the hall; falling upon the bright floor and the long row of servants and retainers that were arranged around, and glossily reflected from the sharp holly leaves and its bright red berries. The old portraits did not light up much, and looked very nearly as gloomy as ever; but a full halo of the firelight was about the squire's chair, and upon my lady as she stood beside him. Two or three of the serving-men played a strange old tune upon as strange old instruments; and the forester now and then threw in a few wild notes of his bugle, that sounded through the house and aroused all the echoes; but the wind sighed outside still.

And all this while the little dancers were going through the slow, graceful steps of their pretty dance; with the most respectful bows and courtesies, the most ceremonious

presenting of hands and acceptance of the same, the most graceful and complicated turns and bends; till at last when the music suddenly struck into a quick measure, Edric presented his right hand to little May, and they danced gaily forward to where my lady stood near the squire and made their low reverence—first to her, and then to each other. Then Edric led his little partner back to her seat, and returned to his grandmother. For my lady was his grandmother, and he had no parents.

As the Yule Log snapped and crackled and blazed higher and higher, even so did the mirth of all in the great hall. They talked, and laughed, and sang, and played games, and not an echo in the house could get leave to be silent.

All of a sudden, in the midst of the fun, a little boy, dressed like Robin Redbreast in a dark coat and bright red waistcoat, opened one of the hall doors; and just showing himself for a moment, he flung the door back and an old man entered. His hair was perfectly white, and so was his beard, which reached down to his waist. On his head was a crown of yew and ivy, and in his hand a long staff topped with holly-berries; his dress was a long brown robe which fell down about his feet, and on it were sewed little spots of white cloth to represent snow. He made a low bow to the squire and my lady, and when Robin Redbreast had discreetly closed the door so that nothing could come in but a little wind, he began to sing in a queer little cracked voice—

"Oh! here come I, old Father Christmas, welcome or not,
I hope old Father Christmas will never be forgot,
Make room, room, I say,
That I may lead Mince Pye this way.
Walk in, Mince Pye, and act thy part,
And show the gentles thy valiant heart."

With that Robin opened the door again, and another figure came in, dressed like a woman in a dark purple gown bordered with a light brownish yellow. A large apple was fastened on the top of her head, and she wore bunches of raisins at her ears instead of earrings; while

her necklace was of large pieces of citron strung together, and her bracelets of cloves, and allspice, and cinnamon. In her hand she carried a large wooden sword.

"What was that for?" said Carl, who had listened with the most intense interest.

"Why to fight off the people that wanted to make her up into a real mince pie, I suppose," said the stocking. "She came into the room singing—

'Room, room, you gallant souls, give me room to rhyme,
I will shew you some festivity this Christmas time.
Bring me the man that bids me stand,
Who says he'll cut me down with an audacious hand.
I'll cut him and hew him as small as a fly,
And see what he'll do then to make his mince-pye.
Walk in, St. George.

'Oh in come I St. George, the man of courage bold,
With my sword and buckler I have won three crowns of gold;
I fought the fiery Dragon, and brought him to the slaughter,
I saved a beauteous Queen and a King of England's daughter.
If thy mind is high, my mind is bold;
If thy blood is hot, I will make it cold.'"

"What did he want to do that for?" said Carl.

"Oh, in the days when St. George lived," replied the stocking, "the more men a man killed the more people thought of him; and this man was trying to make himself like St. George. He had a great pasteboard helmet on his head with a long peacock's feather streaming from the top of it, and a wooden sword, and a tin-covered shield on which were nailed clusters of holly-berries in the figure of a cross. His shoes were of wood too, and his jacket and small-clothes of buck-skin, with sprigs of yew fastened upon all the seams, and great knots of green and red ribbons at the knees. As soon as he had sung his song he began his fight with Mince Pye, and a dreadful fight it was, if one might judge by the noise; also Mince Pye's sword became quite red with the holly-berries. But St. George let his shield take all the blows; and when Mince Pye had spent all her strength upon it, he thrust at her with his sword, and down she came."

"Who? Mince Pye?" said Carl. "Oh, that is too bad!"

"Mince Pye thought so too," said the stocking, "for she cried out—

'Oh St. George, spare my life!'

Then said old Father Christmas—

'Is no Doctor to be found
To cure Mince Pye, who is bleeding on the ground?'"

"Was there any?" said Carl.

"There was somebody who called himself one. He came running into the hall the moment old Father Christmas called for him, and you never saw such a queer little figure. He had an old black robe, and a black cap on his head, and a black patch over one eye."

"What was that for?" said Carl.

"He had been curing himself, I suppose," said the stocking. "And it would seem that he was not satisfied with any of his features, for he had put on a long pasteboard nose painted red, and a pasteboard chin. In his hand he carried a great basket of bottles. If one might believe his own account, he was a doctor worth having.

'Oh yes, there is a doctor to be found
To cure Mince Pye, who is bleeding on the ground.
I cure the sick of every pain,
And none of them ever are sick again.'

Father Christmas thought it must cost a great deal to be cured after that fashion, so like a prudent man he said—

'Doctor, what is thy fee?'

And the Doctor probably did not like to be questioned for he answered—

'Ten pounds is my fee;
But fifteen I must take of thee
Before I set this gallant free.'

But as it was necessary that Mince Pye should be cured Father Christmas only said—

'Work thy will, Doctor.'

Then the doctor took a bottle out of his basket, and began to dance and sing round Mince Pye.

'I have a little bottle by my side,
The fame of which spreads far and wide;
Drop a drop on this poor man's nose.'

And with that Mince Pye jumped up as well as ever."

"But that was not all," said Carl. "What else?"

"That was not quite all," said the stocking, "for another man came in, with a great basket of dolls at his back and a tall red cap on his head. And he sang too—

'Oh! in come I, little saucy Jack,
With all my family at my back;
Christmas comes but once a year,
And when it does it brings good cheer,
Roast-beef, plum-pudding, and mince-pye,
Who likes that any better than I;
Christmas makes us dance and sing;
Money in the purse is a very fine thing,
Ladies and gentlemen, give us what you please.'

Then Squire Darlington and my lady each took out some money, and Edric carried it to the masquers, and as he had not any money himself he told them that he was very much obliged to them; and then they went off."

"What did they give them money for?" said Carl.

"Oh, they expected it—that was what they came for. People used to go about in that way to the rich houses at Christmas time, to get a little money by amusing the gentlefolks."

"I suppose they were very much amused?" said Carl, with a little sigh.

"Very much—especially Edric. And after they were gone he came and stood before the great fire and thought it all over, smiling to himself with pleasure."

"Edric," said my lady, "it is time for you to go to bed."

"Yes, grandmother—but I am afraid I can't go to sleep."

"Why not?" said Squire Darlington. "What are you smiling at?"

"Oh, we have had such a splendid night, grandfather! —the people were dressed so finely—and did not Mince Pye fight well? and was not the Doctor queer! and I am sure my stocking will be as full as *anything!*"

Squire Darlington drew the boy towards him and seated him on his knee while he spoke thus; and passing his hand caressingly over the young joyous head, and smoothing the brown hair that was parted—child-fashion —in the middle of the forehead, and came curling down upon the lace frill; he looked into Edric's face with a world of pleasure and interest.

"And so you have enjoyed the evening, dear boy?" he said.

"Oh, yes, grandfather!—so much! I am sure Christmas is the very happiest time of the whole year!"

Squire Darlington stroked down the hair again, and looked in the bright eyes, but with something of wistfulness now; and without stirring his hand from the boy's head, his look went towards the fire.

The Yule Log was blazing there steadily, although it now showed a great front of glowing coals that had not yet fallen from their place. A clear red heat was all that part of the log, and hardly to be distinguished from the pile of coal below; while bright points of flame curled and danced and ran scampering up the chimney, as if they too were playing Christmas games. But each end of the log still held out against the fire, and had not even lost its native brown.

The Squire looked with an earnest gaze that was not daunted by the glowing light; but his brows were slightly raised, and though the caressing movement of his hand was repeated, it seemed now to keep time to sorrowful music; and his lips had met on that boundary line between smiles and tears. Presently a little hand was laid against his cheek, and a little lace ruffle brushed lightly over its furrows.

"Grandfather, what is the matter? What makes you look grave!"

The Squire looked at him, and taking his hand in his own patted it softly against his face.

"The matter, my dear?" he said. "Why the matter is that Christmas has come and gone a great many times."

"But that is good, grandfather," said Edric, clapping his hands together. "Just think! there will be another Christmas in a year. Only a year. And we had one only a year ago—and such a pleasant Christmas!"

"Only a year," repeated the old man, slowly. "No, Edric, it is only sixty years."

"What do you mean, grandfather?" said the boy, softly.

"Sixty years ago, my dear," said Squire Darlington, "there was just such a Yule Log as that burning in this very fireplace. And the windows, and the picture-frames —there were not quite so many then—were trimmed with holly-berries and yew from the same trees from which these wreaths have come to-day. And this old chair stood here, and everything in this old hall looked just as it does now."

"Well, grandfather?" said Edric, catching his breath a little,—and the wind gave one of its low sighs through the keyhole.

"Well, my dear—instead of one dear little couple on the floor"—and the old man drew the boy closer to him, "there were six,—as merry-eyed and light-footed little beings as ever trod this green earth. At the head I stood with your grandmother, Edric—a dear little thing she was!" said Squire Darlington with a kindly look towards my lady, whose eyes were cast down now, for a wonder, and her lips trembling a little. "Her two brothers, and my two, and the orphan boy that we loved like a brother; his sister, and my four little sisters—precious children! that they were!—made up the rest. Light feet, soft voices, and sweet laughter—they went through this old hall—like a troop of fairies, I was going to say,—more like a ray of pure human happiness.

"My father sat here, and my mother opposite; her

picture watches the very spot now; and of these good friends at the other end of the hall—ay, old Cuthbert remembers it—there were two or three; but many others that bore their names.

"My child—that is sixty years ago!"

"And where are they now, grandfather," said Edric, under his breath.

"In heaven—the most of them," said the old man, solemnly. "But one couple remains of the six. Of those other dear children not one is left—and not one but gave good hope in his death that he was going to be with Jesus. They still remember that He came to earth, but they sing another song from ours—their hearts dance with a different joy. We shall know, one day, if we are faithful. They are exceedingly fair to my remembrance, they are fairer now in reality."

The old Squire was silent for a few minutes, with his eyes again turned towards the fire, while Edric looked up at the sweet portrait to which his grandfather had referred, and wondered how it was that those eyes always met his. Then Squire Darlington spoke again, and with a different manner.

"Everybody that has money makes Christmas a time of feasting and rejoicing, Edric," he said. "What does Christmas day celebrate?"

"The birth of Christ," said Edric, gravely.

"Yes!" said Squire Darlington. "The birth of Christ, 'Who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor; that we through his poverty might be made rich.' There is a motto for Christmas day: ay, for one's whole life."

"Grandfather," said Edric, "does everybody that loves Christ love all the poor disagreeable people?"

"That is what the Bible says, Edric. 'For if any man seeth that his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of Christ in him?'"

"Grandfather," said Edric, thoughtfully, "when I am a man, I will take a great deal of care of poor people."

It was rather a sad smile that the old Squire gave him, and yet it was very tender.

"My dear Edric," he said, "never say *when I am a man* I will do good. There is hardly any good work that a child may not help forward or help to keep back. Will you wait till you are a man, Edric, before you begin to love Christ?"

"I think I do love Him now, grandfather," said Edric. "I should think everybody would; He has done so much for us."

There was the same look of love and sadness for a moment in the old man's face before he answered—

"My motto has another bearing, dear boy, which should be first in the heart of every man and every child, in this world, which Christ died to save—'*If ye love me*, keep my commandments.'"

And when the Christmas Eve was almost ended, Squire Darlington kissed and blessed his little grandson, and Edric went upstairs to bed.

And the wind sighed no more that night.

"And did he do as he said he would, when he got to be a man?" inquired Carl.

"I don't know," said the stocking—"I never heard."

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